

PRIMITIVE  
**Church Government,**  
IN  
The Practice of the REFORMED in *Bohemia.*  
OR, AN  
ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
*Ecclesiastick* ORDER and DISCIPLINE  
AMONG  
**The Reformed;**

OR, (as they call'd themselves)  
*The UNITY of the Brethren in Bohemia.*

WITH  
Some Notes of *John-Amos Comenius*

Serving to Illustrate the same;

AND A  
PREFACE pointing out the True Way to a Solid PEACE,  
ORDER, and UNITY.

AND  
Giving an ABSTRACT of the HISTORY of the said  
Brethren, in so far as it relates to this Account.

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1 Thes. 5. 22. *Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.*  
*I approve greatly the Laws of Sailing, which do set him, that is to*  
*be Master of the Ship, first at the Oars: then bring him to the*  
*Prow, and at length after long Experience in Sailing and Ob-*  
*servation of the Winds, place him at the Helm. This is also the*  
*way of the Art of War, first a Souldier, then a Captain, then a*  
*General.* Greg. Naz: in Orat. fun. Basil. M

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Printed in the Year, 1703.

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Church Government

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OF THE  
A C C O U N T  
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AMONG

The Reformed;

Q. R. (as they call themselves)  
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Serving to illustrate the same,  
A N D A  
PREFACE pointing out the true Way to a solid PEACE  
O R D E R, and U N I T Y.  
A N D  
Giving an A B S T R A C T of the H I S T O R Y of the said  
Brethren, in so far as it relates to this Account.

I. That 5. 22. From all things, be it said that which is  
I suppose exactly the same of which no further  
be Master of the ship, and at the same time being  
from, and at length after long Experience in the sea and  
formation of the Wind, place him at the Helm. This is also the  
way of the Art of War, which is to be learned, when Captain, when  
General, when in Office, when in Battle.

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## To the READER.

**M**AN was Originally created to Love God and to enjoy Him for ever. Love is the noblest Power and Capacity that a Creature can be endued with ; and to pervert it, the greatest evil. *Omnia ponderibus suis aguntur, loca sua petunt. Amor meus pondus meum est; eo feror quocunque feror.* All things (saith Saint Augustine) are acted "and move to their proper place by their weights. My Love is my "weight; by this I am carried, whithersoever I am carried. *To love God with all our Hearts and our Neighbours as our selves is Charity.* And tho we had all other attainments, all Faith, and all knowledge, and bestowed all our Goods to feed the poor, and pretended to glorifie GOD by giving our Bodies to be burned for Religion, and have no Charity, it profits us nothing. This is Gods own Nature, and the true weight that moves to Him : For God is love, and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.

Man turned away his Heart and his Love from God, and set it on himself and on the Creatures. He lov'd himself above all things and the Creatures for himself. He became his own Idol, and pitched upon the Creatures for his chief Good and happiness, and sought to enjoy them, The Soul having turn'd away from the true Good, feeling an infinite desire after some Good, and an infinite emptiness within it self to satisfy that desire, *Projicit se Foras miserabiliter scalpi avida contractu sensibilibus*, it gets out of it self, it bends outwardly having a wretched itch, to be tickled with the touch of sensible things, and to seek for happiness among the Creatures. This is that miserable corrupt and sinful state in which we are all born, in which we live, & in which we are so deeply sunk, that we can hardly believe it to be a Corruption, but are ready to take it for our Original Nature, as if we had been so created by God, which state nevertheless will make us miserable for ever, if we do not get out of it.

Man's Destruction was of himself, but he was not able to save and to recover himself again, in God only is his help found, and he hath laid help upon one mighty to save, who is able to save them to the uttermost, that

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that come unto God by him, and as willing as able. The Eternal Son of God becomes the Saviour and Redeemer of Man, and because the Children are partakers of flesh and blood: He also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the Devil. Wherefore in all things it becometh Him to be made like unto his Brethren, that He might be a mercifull and faithfull high Priest in things pertaining to God, to make Reconciliation for the sins of the People: For in that He himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted. For God sent not His Son into the World to condemn the World, but that the World through Him might be saved.

Now Man being so sunk in sense and sensible things, that scarce any thing can affect and touch his heart, but what is conveyed to him by sensible means; therefore the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us; & as we cloath our thoughts with Vocal sounds or written letters to convey them into other Mens minds by their senses; so the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, cloathed himself with our Mortal Nature, that thereby he might convey His Grace and Truth unto us, and we might receive of His fulness. The life thus manifested it self, that Men might bear and might see with their eyes, and might handle the word of Life, and might thereby come to have the Divine Life kindled in them, and to have true fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

In this state our Lord Jesus Christ taught Men, how to return to & to recover the Love of GOD both by Word & Deed, and seeing that so long as self love and the love of the World and of the things that are in the World do possess a Man's heart, the love of the Father cannot be in him: Therefore His great Lesson to all that would be His Disciples and come after Him was, To deny themselves, and take up their cross and follow Him; who never did his own will, but the will of Him that sent Him, never sought his own Glory and Honour but His Father's; never studied to please himself, but to please GOD; never sought to be great in the World or to be learned, or to have praise of Men, or to have Wealth and Riches; but choose to be poor end mean, and despised, and not to have where to lay His head; did not follow after pleasures, but was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Griefs; despised all the things that we hunt and seek after, and embraced the things that we dread and have an aversion  
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Our Lord Jesus Christ saw it needful, that Men should be thus taught sensibly both in word and deed by others like themselves, and endued with His Life and Spirit even unto the end of the World, and therefore he choose out among his Disciples Twelve Men who were his constant attendants, and taught by Him, and He sent them forth to Preach the Gospel. He choose out other Seventy Disciples also, and sent them forth in like manner.

After our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension, when they were filled with the Holy Ghost, they became Witnesses unto Him unto the uttermost parts of the Earth, and ceased not to warn Men to Repent and be converted; and they were careful to pitch upon other faithful Men endued with the same Spirit, who might teach and guide others, both by word and by example, and so to continue and extend this blessing to the end of the World.

So long as the Ministers of Christ were His living and sensible Images and followers, they were powerful and Effectual Instruments of forming His Nature, and conveying His Life and Spirit unto others, even as one lighted Candle lights another, and both give light to all that are in the House; and their words were full of force and light and touch'd the heart as coming from the heart, and being darted with love, and transcribed in the Life, and were the words of Jesus Christ himself; and the effect they had on others was not to make them talk much, nor to be fierce against others that differ'd from them, but to judge and think meanly of themselves, to learn to deny themselves and their own wills and desires, and to seek to be true followers of Christ, and to walk in love.

But fra once the wealth, power and greatness and learning of the World came into the Church of Christ, and all the World set up to be Christian, Christianity was quite changed, many got in to be the Pastors of Christs Flock that had nothing of His Spirit, the qualifications required by the Apostle were no longer regarded, but other Rules prescrib'd by Humane wisdom; and the corruption of the Pastors compleated the corruption of the Church; the essential Doctrine of Jesus Christ was glossed away by the false Interpretations and Traditions of Men, Christianity was turned into a strife of words, a Sett of Opinions, and an observation of some outward formalities; and because of a difference of Sentiments or Practice in these,  
Men



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Men were taught to hate one another, and *true Charity* was quite banish'd from off the Earth. The horrid *Corruptions* and lamentable *Divisions of Christendom*, call for Weeping and Fasting and Prayer from all ranks of People, and especially for that the *Salt has lost his savour*, and the *Candle gives no light*.

Among all the *Divisions* of the Christian world, there are none which afford matter of greater Astonishment than those of *Britain*, and particularly of this Kingdom, while our contentions about our particular *forms of Church Government* have occasion'd such strife and hatred, calumnies and evil speakings, Wars and fightings, blood and confusion. We all grant the necessity of *Order*; and where there is a due Subordination, the *Order* is most comely and stable, we see it in all things of Art and Nature; in *sailing*, the Boys, the Rowers, the Mariners, the Pilot, the Master; in *Armies*, the Serjeant, the Ensign, the Lieutenant, the Captain, the Colonel, the General; in the Body, the Head, the Eyes, the Ears, the Tongue, the Hands, the Feet. We know there is a Mob among all Ranks, among *Ministers* as well as the People, who have need of wise and pious *Watchmen* and *Guides*. We see the footsteps of such a comely and stable *Order* in the Records of Holy Writ (which some will needs call extraordinary, and appointed but for the time, as if the Mariners, of a fleet being resolved to mutiny, and rabble out the ship Masters and Pilots, should affirm these were extraordinary Officers appointed only for a time by the first Admiral and great Master of Navigation, and that the Direction of the Helm belong'd to them all alike) and that the *primitive* and purest times of the Church were careful to observe the same.

But suppose *the form of Church Government*, about which men raise such Dust and Clamour were intirely conformable to the *primitive Patern*, yet to make that our great and chief business, to spend our own and the peoples zeal about it, as if the stress of Christianity lay upon it, while neither they nor we are conformed to the *life and Spirit of Jesus Christ*, is a most preposterous Order, and altogether contrary to the Doctrine and Practice of our Lord and Master, this is that *Parisaick Spirit*, against which our Saviour speaks with such severity, the being zealous for *the lesser things*, while the more weighty ones are neglected, to wit, *Judgement, Mercy, Faithfulness and*  
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*the Love of God ; the being careful to have the outside ordered, without seeking in the first place to have our selves and others renewed within. Wo to you, saith our Lord, Scribes, and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for you make clean the outside of the Cup and platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the Cup and Platter, that the outside may be clean also, Mat. 23. 25. 26,*

Our Lords practice was quite contrary to this spirit and temper. He called upon all men to repent, to deny themselves, to beware of Covetousness, not to lay up Treasures upon Earth, but in Heaven, to take no thought what they should eat or drink, or wherewithal they should be clothed, or for the morrow, but to seek first the Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness thereof ; to judge themselves and not their Brother ; to do nothing to be seen of men, to forgive men their Trespases, to love our enemies, to bless them, do them good and pray for them. He tells us who are Blessed ; the poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, they who do hunger and thirst after Righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, they which be persecuted for Righteousness sake, reviled, and all manner of evil spoken against them falsely for his sake. His great care was to have his Apostles and those who were to teach all Nations, form'd into this Spirit, that they might be Instruments of conveying the same Divine Nature, Life and Spirit unto others : But for the outward things of Religion, as to Rites of Worship and Forms of Government, &c. he scarce ever mentions them, as well knowing that if *that which is within the Cup be once cleansed, the outside will be clean also ; if the eye be once single, the whole body will be full of Light ; and if men be renewed in the Spirit of their Minds, they will follow the things that make for Order, Decency, Unity and Peace.*

But the contrary preposterous way mars all : For tho the outside be in never so exact a form, if the inside be not cleansed it avails nothing, *tho we speak with the Tongues of men and Angels, and have not charity, we are become as sounding brass or a tinkling Cymbal, if we have no measure of the spirit and nature of Christ in us, we are like Puppets form'd outwardly, and moved by wires ; like Apes that take up the Painters Pencils and colours to draw Pictures as he does, but spoil and daub all, as wanting his Spirit ; like unskilful men, taking up a well tuned instrument, such as the Holy Scriptures are, and making*



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king nothing therewith but a jarring noise in stead of an harmonious and divine Melody. Men are not only unprofitable thereby, but infinitely mischievous and hurtful; pervert the Religious temper of some into a false and *fierce Zeal* against others, and do not excite in them a just indignation against themselves and their own corrupt Natures; and instead of fitting them to be living stones in Christs building, making them flie and dash against one another, and against the fellow Workmen; and expose Religion to the Obloquy, contempt and scorn of others, while they see men who profess to be so zealously Religious, altogether void of those Qualities, which they see by the very *light of Nature* that a truly Religious Man will be endowed with. This preposterous way brings forth into the world that Generation, of which the Apostle forewarned us, (1 Tim. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. This know also, that in the last days perillous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, Blasphemers, disobedient to Parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, beady, high minded, lovers of Pleasures more than lovers God. Having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof, from such turn away.

But if on the other hand we obeyed the Directions of our Lord and Master, and began first within and excited others to do so too, and learn'd first to deny our selves and to take up our cross willingly, rather than to shift it upon others, and studied alway to follow Him, embracing the state of things that he imbrac'd, and despising the things that he despis'd, learning of Him to be meek and lowly in heart, and above all to put on Charity; were we thus endued with the Spirit of Christ, our light would so shine before Men, that they seeing our good works would glorifie our Father which is in Heaven, it would be our great care to have Christ form'd in others, we would so wisely handle the Organ of the Holy Scriptures, as not to hinder the Divine Efficacy of it upon Mens hearts, but make them feel, that the Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul, making wise the simple, enlightning the Eyes and rejoicing the Heart, and we would not be so wedded and bigotted to our particular forms, as to think them perfect, and in all things like to the Patern in the mount, and that they could not be bettered; but would be willing to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good.



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It is with respect to this, that I have adventured to translate the following small Treatise into our Language. It is an Account of the Order, Government and Discipline of the Reformed Church of Bohemia, of which take this brief Narrative.

All the Slavonick Nations, and among these the Bohemians and Moravians were at first converted unto the Christian Faith by the Greek and Eastern Churches, and observed their Rites. The Roman Church laboured by degrees to subject them to her self, whose Innovations the Bohemians from time to time wrestled against, until the Year 1400, when John Hus and Jerome of Prague did resolutely preach the Truth of GOD, and oppose the Corruptions of the Roman Church, and were triumphantly put to Death at the Council of Constantine, after Letters of safe Conduct had been given them by the Emperor. The Barbarity of which, the Noblemen of Bohemia and Moravia did remonstrate against, in a Letter written to the Council in Name of all their Community, having their Seals and Subscriptions round about it, the Original of which is now in the Library of the Marshalls-College of Aberdeen. After this, the Pope excommunicating the Hussites in Bohemia, and inviting the Emperor and the Princes to root them out, there followed a long and grievous War, in which the Hussites had still the Advantage, till the Council of Basle being called, and an Accommodation proposed, and the Use of the Cup offered to be restored, and of the Publick Worship in the Vulgar Tongue, their Delegates accepted of the same, and the great-est part joined in again with the Roman Church, the rest being persecuted retired into a Mountainous Countrey next to Silesia. They gave themselves to Prayer, the Reading of the Holy Scriptures, and Works of Piety, call'd one another by the Amiable Name of BRETHREN and SISTERS, and their Society the UNITY of the BRETHREN. For as the CHURCH is a Society of People, call'd out of the World, for attaining to Salvation by Faith in Christ, join'd by the Law of mutual Charity: So Ecclesiastick UNITY was to them a Society of Churches join'd by the Law of mutual Love, for building them up in the common Salvation.

In this State, they were anxious how they should have Pastors of Souls, after the Decease of those they had. They inclin'd to have Ordinarians within themselves, according to the power that Christ has committed

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to his Church; that while they had Persons who were ordained, they might  
ordain others, and so on, to succeed them. But they were afraid, lest this  
Ordination should not be legitimate, if a Presbyter, and not a Bishop, should  
ordain another Presbyter: And were troubled how to defend such an Ordina-  
tion, either among their own, or others, if it should be call'd in question.

At length, after many Years Deliberation, in the Year 1467,  
the most eminent among them that were dispers'd thro' Bohemia and Mora-  
via meet together, to the number of about 70, and pouring forth their Tears  
and Prayers before GOD, that he would be pleased to shew, if their purpose  
was agreeable to him, and if this was the time for it, they resolve to know  
the Will of GOD by Lot. They choose therefore, by suffrages, from  
among themselves Nine Men, whom they judged worthy beyond  
the rest of undertaking the Ministry, and having put into the  
Hands of a Boy (whom they call'd to the Meeting, and who knew  
nothing of the Matter) twelve little Papers, folded up, they ordered  
him to distribute them among the Nine Persons. Nine of them were  
blank Paper, and on Three of them only was written, IT IS THE  
Will of GOD, which they beg'd to be discover'd so soon.  
It might have happen'd then every one of them to have gotten  
blank Paper, which would have been a Sign of the Negative Will  
of GOD. But it came to pass, that the three written Papers fell  
into the Hands of three among them, *Mathias Kunz*, a most Re-  
verend Man, *Thomas Hradecius*, a Learned Person, and *Elia Kromer*,  
one of Singular Prudence.

These they embrac'd with Joy as given from Heaven, and they  
deliberate about their Ordination. A little before that time, a part of  
the *Waldenses* banish'd out of *France*, came to reside in the Confines  
of *Austria* and *Moravia*. That therefore they might wholly satisfy  
the Scruples of their own, or other Men's Conscience, that might  
arise now or hereafter, they send unto them *Michael Zamborius*,  
with other two, to make known their State and ask their Counsel.  
They find *Stephanus* their Bishop, who calling to him another Bi-  
shop, and some Ministers, makes known to them their Origin, the  
Purity of their Doctrine, the grievous Persecutions they had suffer'd  
in *Italy* and *France*, and the lawful and uninterrupted Succession of  
their Bishops from the Apostles to that time. By them then these de-  
legated *Bohemian* Ministers were consecrated Bishops, and the power  
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committed to them of *Ordinary Ministers*. They took the Name of *Seniors* and *Antistes*, because of the Abuse of the other; and while they thought of uniting with those good *Waldenses*, these last were suddenly scattered, and *Sever* their Bishop suffered Martyrdom, being inhumanely burnt at *Vienna*.

The *United Brethren* in the mean time suffered many Persecutions in *Bohemia*, yet their Number encreased, so that, about the Year 1500, they had about two hundred Churches in *Bohemia* and *Moravia*. The publick Churches were possess'd by the *Romanists* and false *Hussites*, and they had only *Meeting Houses*, their *Pastors* earning their Bread by the Labour of their Hands.

When after this *Luther* arose in *Germany*, the BRETHREN sent once and again Delegates to him, and other famous Preachers of the Gospel, by which they found there was a Harmony, as to Doctrine, in the most remarkable Points of it; but the Brethren of *Bohemia* had the Praise, for the Exactness of Order and Discipline, beyond all the rest. They could have wish'd to have united with the Reformed Churches in *Germany*, and elsewhere; but finding various Dissentions to arise among them, they thought it became them to shun the being addicted to a Party; and to entertain *Christian Friendship* with them all, being so much the more careful of preserving Peace, Order and Discipline in their own Societies.

After that *Ferdinand* had, in the *Smalcaldick War*, overcome the Protestants in *Germany*, he falls upon *Bohemia*, and, in the Year 1548, banisheth the *United Brethren* from that Kingdom. Who going into the *Greater Poland* and *Prussia*, spread there the Doctrine of the Gospel, and founded several Churches; those of the *Lesser Poland*, at the same time, having received Reformers from *Switzerland*; but, in the end, they join'd in the Order of the Brethren of *Bohemia*; there being constituted out of the Number of their Pastors, five *Seniors* with as many *Consensors*, which Example was followed also in *Lithuania*.

At length, when, in the Year 1609, the *States* of *Bohemia* had obtain'd from *Rodolph* the Emperor Liberty of Conscience, they labour to bring all the Evangelical Churches of different Rites into an Union; and they require the *Seniors* and *Patrons* of the *United Brethren* to exhibit, what singular thing they had beyond others, especially



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as to Discipline and Order. Upon which they exhibit the following Account: Which being approven, and it being judg'd in the mean time, that the other Churches could not be reduced to that Form, they were allowed to retain their own Discipline and Order, till God should afford a more perfect one, that might be equally useful for all.

And that nothing might be omitted, that might seem to contribute to the constant Observance of this good Order. This Draught and Model of it was revised, compleated, and offered to all the Ministers to be read over and seriously considered in a General Synod at Zerawich in Moravia, anno 1616. And there it was approven by all, and ratified by the Subscriptions of the Seniors and Consensors that were present from Bohemia, Moravia, and Poland: Not only, that it might be a more certain Evidence of the thing to Posterity, but that withal every one might look on himself, as the more strictly obliged to the careful Observation of those things in mutual Charity.

Thus Religion did seem to flourish some time in Bohemia, but with Liberty of Religion, Licentiousness of Life crept in, and so fitted them for sharper Rods.

Ferdinand succeeding Emperor to Rodolphus, depriv'd them of their Liberty and Privileges, after which there following a War, and the Emperor obtaining the Victory anno 1610, the chief of the Nobility were put to Death, all the Pastors banished, and the People first flattered, then threatned to change their Religion. When, in six Years time, they had prevail'd little, in the Year 1627, all the rest of the Nobility of that Perswasion were banished, and the People tryed by Imprisonment and Tortures, so that by a Persecution of 40 Years, Matters were brought to that pass, that, of that Perswasion, there remain'd no Church, nor School, nor private Exercise of Religion, nor Sacred Book, their Bibles being burnt. And of Thousands that escap'd into Neighbouring Kingdoms, many disheartned by the Trouble of Exile fell from their Constancy, or by the Continuance of their Calamities were cut off, so that (saith John Amos Comenius the Narrator of this) we are but very small Remainers here and there, like pleasing Grapes, or as the shaking of an Olive Tree, two or three Berries in the top of the uppermost Bough, (II. 17. 6.)

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Many being desirous, that the *Model* of this Order should be published to the World, the *dispersed Brethren*, at a Synod in *Lesna* of *Poland*, anno 1622, gave order to print it, which was done accordingly. And, in the Year 1666, the truly Pious and Learned *John Amos Comenius*, the Author of the well known *Janua Linguarum*, &c. and the then only surviving Bishop of the Church of the Brethren of *Bohemia*, ( who, at the foresaid Synod in 1622, had been assumed into that Order, ) being solicited from *England* by some both of the Episcopal and Presbyterian Perswasion, to communicate an Account of the Government of the Churches in *Bohemia* and *Moravia*, he accordingly reprinted the same Year at *Amsterdam* the foresaid Account, to which he prefix'd a short History of the *Bohemian Church*, ( from which this is extracted ) illustrating the Account it self of their Order, with some Notes, and subjoining a Patherick Exhortation to all the Churches, especially that of *England*, deploring the Lamentable State of divided Christendom, and exhorting them to Peace, Purity, Unity, Discipline and Order.

It is from this Copy, that the following Account is translated, which perhaps may not be unacceptable to those who desire to know something of the Order and Discipline of other Churches. The pious and learned men of that Age owned that this Church Government and Order, was either the very same which *Jesus Christ* instituted, and his Apostles settled, and the primitive Church observed, or the nearest to it, and to be wish'd for in all the Churches. It was not established precipitantly, but with the deliberation of many Years, nor out of a Spirit of Contradiction to others, but with respect to the great ends of Religion, and to the primitive Pattern and Practice; nor from self seeking, but from a regard to the common good and Salvation of all; nor from a luxuriance of wit, and in a state of prosperity, but in the midst of wrestlings of Conscience, and in a state of Adversity; nor out of a presumptuous confidence in themselves, but with fear and trembling; and many fervent Prayers to God, and with great respect to men, asking Counsel on every hand, where it could be hoped for; and with a Resolution of trying all things, and holding fast that which was good; so as that they form'd to themselves this Canon: That if any should arise better reformed, their Posterity should be



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be obliged to join them. Their Order also was tried in the fire of Persecution for two continued Ages, and they found nothing in all that time more agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, and the Apostolick practice, and which did more satisfy their Consciences. During all that time they had no Schism amongst them, neither did their Unity among themselves, favour any thing of the Spirit of Schism from others, their aim was (as Zanchius says of them) not overturn from the very Foundation, whatsoever they found in the Roman Church, without any difference, but to build up their Churches according to the true and Apostolick Rule of Piety, rejecting what ought to be rejected, amending what ought to be amended, and retaining what ought to be retained. They were very careful to distinguish between the Essentials of Christianity, and the Ministerial and accidental things thereof, and to make the two last always serviceable to promote the first. They were united together, not by outward views of worldly Hopes or fears, but by the inward power of Faith, and Hope and Love, derived from the Head; from whom the whole Body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplied, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, made encrease of the body, unto the edifying of it self in Love. Their Order was so constituted as to submit to every Civil Government, yeato all men for Good, and in the mean time not to betray the Churches Liberty. It was suited to every well ordered Government, so as not to disturb it. To the Monarchical as having an Episcopacy; to the Aristocratical, as having a Senate, to the Democratical, as having Synods. Their Order had within it self, Antidotes against Corruptions, and for preventing of Disorders; a wholsom Discipline; a wonderful Institution of Touch for the holy Ministry; a well ordered Imparity and subordination, (like a body having many members, who have different Offices, all fitly join'd together, and every joint supplying according to its measure, for the encrease of the Body, and for preventing its hurt) where every one had a Monitor; where such fences were made against Ambition, Avarice, Arrogancy, Strife, Divisions, Heresie, Vanity, Curiosity, and other Corruptions.

When we shall once come to be so happy as to be renewed in the Spirit of our Monks, to be rooted and grounded in love, to do nothing through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of Mind each to esteem other better than himself



himself, to do nothing thro' partiality and the concern for a Party, but singly to seek the true Good of Men, and of the Church of Jesus Christ, and to do all things without murmurings and disputings; when we shall learn to deny our Inclinations, and to subject them to the Laws of Jesus Christ; to make the last, and not the first, the Rule by which to order things in the House of GOD: We may then come to see that our Forms are not so perfect, but that they have need to be bettered and amended; and that the following Treatise is worthy of Mens perusal and consideration.

to do nothing but to be a part  
of the Church of Jesus  
Christ, and to do all things  
which are necessary and  
expedient for the  
Law of Jesus Christ, and not the Law  
of which to order things in the House of GOD. We may then  
come to see that our Forms are not perfect, but that they have  
need to be perfected and amended; and that the following Treatise  
is worthy of Men's perusal and consideration.

**I**n a spontaneous and  
no Society of Men  
sted thing can last  
immediately fall, the  
which is the House of GOD  
the Great King, (Psalm 48, 1) an  
I cannot labour but by force  
days: For all things are here  
and the one and it  
Churches yet it is  
the only one in the  
world.



# *An Account of the Church Order and Discipline in the Unity of the Brethren of Bohemia.*

## THE INTRODUCTION.

### THE CHURCH ORDER in the Unity of the Brethren of Bohemia,

**I**T is abundantly evident from all things of the Universe, that no Society of Men, no Kingdom, City or House, yea, no created thing can subsist without Order, but that all things do immediatly fail, dissolve and decay. The Church then, which is the House of God, ( 1. Tim. 3. 15. ) and the City of the great King, ( Psal. 48. 3. ) and the Kingdom of God ( Matb. 20. 1. ) cannot subsist but by settled Order. Therefore the Apostle says: *Let all things be done decently and in order,* ( 1 Cor. 14. 40. ) and tho one and the same Order cannot be observed in all Churches, yet it is certain, *That every particular Church, the more it has of Order, the more firmly it stands, and the more pleasantly doth it prosper and flourish.* And upon this consideration the first Founders of our Unity when they had separated themselves from Idolaters, did not only take care, ( tho they made it their chief business ) to restore purity of Doctrine and simplicity of Christian Life; but also to establish both these in themselves, and themselves in both, by the Bond of Order. Therefore by the help of God, they ordered both themselves for that Holy Society, and the things pertaining to the pure Worship of God and the Edification of the Church, as near as they could to the Form of the Apostolick and Primitive Church, or as the present State of the Church, afflicted with persecution, could permit. Being then to give a Narrative of this, we shall divide it into Seven Chapters.

I. First. The Order of the whole Unity in general shall be represented.

II. The Order of the Ministers and Synods.

III. The Order of the Ministry, or the manner of the publick Administration of Sacred Things.

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IV. The Domestic Order of the Ministers, or the manner of the Ministers their Private Lives.

V. The Private Order of the People, who are bound to the same.

VI. The Order of Visitation: Or the Superiors their inspection of Inferiors.

VII. The Order of Discipline, by which, as by a Bond, all those things were kept together.

## CHAPTER I.

### Of the ORDER of the whole Unity in general

**T**HE Order of the Unity of the Brethren in general is, both of Things pertaining to the Sacred Worship of God, a certain distinction of them, according to God's Word: and of Persons who unanimously serve God in that Society, a differencing of them, and a Bond and Union of them, by their respective Duties and Offices towards one another.

#### THE ORDER OF THINGS.

When the Brethren perceived that all things were confounded, and that no Body distinguished between those things that were Necessary, and those that were not necessary, or at least between the more and less necessary, and which is worse, that the Fundamentals of Salvation were neglected by the most part of Men, and the Superficials chiefly regarded: They began to lay before Men the difference of the Things contained in the Christian Religion (Jer. 15. 19. Hos. 8. 11. 12. Math. 7. 9. Gal. 4. 10.) and to make appear that,

In the Christian Religion, there are,

I. Some things

Essential.

Ministerial.

Accidental.

**THE ESSENTIALS** of Christianity they call'd those things, in which the Salvation of Man is immediately plac'd: To wit, on God's part, the Grace of God the Father, the Merits of Christ, and the Gift of the Holy Ghost: And on our part, Faith, Charity and Hope. By Faith, understanding



standing the acknowledgements of Gods benefits, and the Application of them made to ones self in particular. By *Charity*, an Ardent and bent desire of loving God, because He hath loved us, and of obeying Him in all things. By *Hope*, a firm Trust and Confidence of persevering in both these, and so of obtaining the end of our Faith. They taught that without these, none could be saved.

The *MINISTERIAL* things of Christianity they affirmed to be those means given by God unto the Church, by which the Grace of God the Father, the Merits of Christ, and the operation of the Holy Ghost are made known to us, and confer'd upon us: That is, by which Faith, Charity and Hope are kindled, cherished and strengthened in us. These are the word of God, the Keys and Sacraments. For God's word reveals unto us, those things which are Essential, ( *Psalm* 19. 12. ) the Keys Assign them ( *Job* 20. 22 ) the Sacraments Seal them, *Rom.* 4. 11. They teach therefore the Ministry of the Church to be necessary, not for its self, but for those Essential Things. Neither is there any other thing to be sought for in the Ministry, and by it, but that Faith may be rendered most pure; Charity most inflam'd; Hope most firm, cleaving inseparably unto the Mercy of God, both in Life and Death, and in all Temptations.

The *ACCIDENTALS* of Christianity ( or as others, the indifferent things ) they call those things which respect the time and place and manner of performing those Ministerial things: That is, the outward Rites and Ceremonies of Religion, which they judged were according to Christian Liberty or Prudence, so to be used, that they should not only not be a hindrance of Faith, Charity, Hope, to wit, by withdrawing from them or darkning them; both which, Idolatrous and Superstitious Ceremonies do: But that they may serve rather to Illustrate and inculcate them. ( *Rom.* 14. throughout. *1 Cor.* 14. throughout. *Col.* 2. 16. and elsewhere. )

And it is about these things chiefly, that the Order of our Unity is conversant: For the Essential and Ministerial things we have in common with all Christians, if they understand and duly consider their true Good. *Rom.* 10. 12. *Eph.* 4. 3. 4. 5. 6. In Accidentals perhaps there may be some things different from others, yet derived from no other Source than the Divine appointment variously pointed out in the Scriptures, and the example of the Primitive

(64)

tive Church. And that it may appear what they are, and whe-  
 ther they sufficiently answer their End, we expose them to the  
 view of the Church, not laying on them the fire of Salvation, but  
 looking on them as an excellent Order, serving most convenient-  
 ly for Edification, as Experience has taught us. Neither do we  
 so pertinaciously maintain these things as that we are not ready to  
 yeild, if better things be offered ( *Phil.* 3. 15. 16. and *1 Thes.* 5.  
 21. ) Nor think we it just to change any thing for light causes ( *1.  
 Cor.* 11. 2. ) Hence it is not permitted to any among us, either to  
 introduce *New Interpretations* or *Opinions*, or to bring in *Unusual  
 Ceremonies*, or to *Write or publish Books* without previous *Examina-  
 tion*, and the common consent of all.

## THE ORDER of PERSONS.

*First among the People.*

**T**he Order of Persons is such a Discrimination of all, as that every  
 one being in his own place, may know exactly who he oversees  
 or to whom he is subject, and what respect or care he owes to the  
 one or the other: And this both as to People and Pastors.

*As to the People*, Our Fathers, (leaving the Natural and Political  
 Government in their own Vigour, to wit, That Husbands Go-  
 vern Wives, Parents Children, Masters their Servants, and Ma-  
 gistrates their Subjects) used to Rank them into Three Degrees,  
 according to the degrees of labour to be used in their Institution:  
 To wit,

In	{	<i>Beginners, or Novices.</i> <i>Proficients and</i> <i>Perfect ones, or tending to Perfection</i> see <i>Heb.</i> <i>5. 13. 1 Cor. 2. 6. &amp; Isid. lib. 2. Eccles. Cap. 21.</i>
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The *Novices* are they, who learn the Catechism, or the first E-  
 lements of Religion: Such are the young Boys, who, by their Pa-  
 rents, are committed to the Care of the Pastors: *Adult Persons* also,  
 who are come off from Idolatry, or have been otherwise neglect-  
 ed, who, if among the Brethren, they yield up themselves to the  
 Care of the Ministers, they use to be instructed and tryed, [ *Heb.*  
*5. 11, 12, 13, 14.* ]

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(41)  
The *Proficients* are they, who being already taught the first Principles of Religion, taken into Care by the Pastors, admitted to the Participation of all the Mysteries in the Church, do more and more exercise themselves in the Knowledge of the Will of GOD, and the practical Observation thereof. And thus keeping themselves in the Order of the Church, they preserve their own Sanctification, [2 Cor. 7. 1. Heb. 6. 1.]

The *Perfect* they call those, who are considerably advanced in the Knowledge of Divine Things, and so strengthened in Faith, Charity, and Hope, that they are now capable of enlightning others also, and of being set over them to keep them in Order, [-Rom. 15. 14. 1 Cor. 2. 6. Phil. 3. 15.] For out of those use to be chosen, I. The Elders, or the Censors of Manners. II. The Overseers of Alms. III. The Church Wardens.

#### The ELDERS.

Are Honest, Grave, Pious Men, chosen out of the whole Congregation for this end, that they may see to the Good Conversation of all the rest. They are impower'd to admonish others, in whom they observe any thing of Disorder, to reprove, to rebuke them, to reconcile those that are at Variance, and to reduce into Order whatsoever Irregularity they shall observe, and this either by themselves, or with the Pastor, to whom they are given as Helpers.

The Youth also, and Men of less Experience, use to ask their Advice in outward things, which concern their Domestick Affairs, and to be faithfully instructed by them. Which, from the Example and Practice of the Primitive Church, we are perswaded is very fit to be done. See Exod. 18. 21. Deut. 1. 13. 1 Cor. 6. 2, 4, 5. 1 Tim. 5. 17.

In like manner there are chosen out of the Female Sex, Honest, Prudent, and Grave Matrons, and are alike impower'd to take Care of the Women. See Rom. 6. and last. 1 Tim. 5. 2, 9, 10. Tit. 2. 3, 4.

#### The ALMONERS.

Are Prudent Men, Conspicuous for Vertue and Fidelity, to whom is committed the Care of the Treasury, (into which any of the People put in, when and what they think fit, that the *Left Hand may not know*

*know what the Right is doing,* ) that, when need requires, they may take Money out of it, record it in Books, and dispense it to the Poor, the Pastor in the mean time being acquainted therewith. For, as much as is possible for us, we prevent Beggary in any of ours, according to GOD's Command, [ *Deut. 15. 47. Rom. 12. 8.* ] It is their Office also to see to the Orphans, the Widows, the Sick, and those that are banished for the Gospel, that they be not destitute of all Help.

### The *WARDENS*

Are Honest Men, to whom is committed the Care of the *Sacred Buildings*, and of those in which the Ministers dwell. For this end they receive the Collections, which use to be made four times a Year, [ *2 Kings 12. 13.* ] they set down particularly what every one gives, they give it out for the Reparation of the Buildings, and for other Uses of the Temple; and once a Year they give an Accompt to the Church of their Receipts and Disbursements. And then usually ( because this Office is Toilsome ) they are freed of it, and others are chosen in their place.

This is the Order of the Brethren among the People: To which all do willingly yield, as being perswaded, both from GOD's Word, and from their own Experience, that it tends to Edification. Neither does any Body thrust himself into an Office, so as to procure Contempt thereby: But every one being lawfully chosen by the whole Congregation, does as freely accept of his Province, as the others commit it to him.

### THE ORDER OF THE MINISTERS in the Unity of the Brethren.

The Ministers of the Church are among us the Priests, or the Pastors of Churches, doing the Office of Embassadors from Christ to the People, ( *2 Cor. 5. 20.* ) whose Office it is to administer the Word, the Keyes, and the Sacraments.

It was not the Custom of our Predecessors to require of those Priests the Knowledge either of the Languages, or of Philosophy, ( so much the rather that this, for want of Schools, could not be had. ) But if they perceived any to be nourished by the Word of Faith, apt to Teach, Sober, Prudent, and having the other Qualities which the Apostolick Canon requires in a Minister of the Church, ( *1 Tim. 3.* )

and



and *Tim. 1.*) being satisfied with this, they own'd them for the true Ambassadors of Christ, which even *Luther* himself did approve, advising in the mean time to add the Study of Languages as much as might be: Which afterwards they observed so far as they could. These have under them young Plants, destinated for the Service of the Church, and to be their Helpers: And above them, for the preserving of Order, their *Bishops* or *Overseers*. Those whom they train up, and have under them, are the *Acoluths*, and the *Deacons*.

*The ACOLUTHS, or Followers and Attendants, or Disciples.*

The *Acoluths* are young Youths received by the Pastors of the Church into their Domestick Society, for this end that they may be more carefully trained up in Letters and good Manners, than they could have been by their Parents or elsewhere, for the future Use of the Church. Thus *Samuel* was brought up with *Eli*, (*1 Sam. 3.*) *Elisha* with *Elias*, (*1 Kings 4. 38.*) and the Company of the Sons of the Prophets with their Elders, (*2 Kings 4. 20.*) Thus *Christ* exercised and trained up with himself, the *Disciples*, before he entrusted them with the Ministry. Thus *Paul* had *Timothy*, *Titus*, *Luke*, for his Companions and Followers: Whence *ἀνοδυσία* is expressly given them, (*Luke. 1. 3. 1 Tim. 4. 6. and 2 Tim. 3. 10.* this is evident in the *Greek* Text.) Hence it is, that, from the times of the Apostles, this Degree was taken up in the Church. Concerning which, see *Cyprian, Lib. 3. Epist. 22.* and the Canons of the Councils.

Now the Brethren give to the *Acoluths* these Offices.

1. To carry themselves Decently, Modestly, and Piously, before the rest of the Youth, to accustom themselves to an Alacrity in a willing Service and Obedience to GOD and the Church, and so to Meekness becoming Disciples, (*2 Tim. 3. 10, 14.*)
2. To be train'd up in the Rudiments of Theology, reading and getting by Heart, the Larger Catechism, the Gospels, the short Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, and those of *Peter*, the Psalms also and Spiritual Hymns, (*2 Tim. 3. 15.*)
3. The reading of the Sacred Text is assign'd to them, at home, at the time of Prayers, and sometimes also an Exhortation from the same

same Text at the same time, and that both to try, what Fitness GOD hath entrusted each of them with for Teaching; and that by Degrees, they may acquire a Freedom in GOD, which in its time may be needful before the Church, (*Luke 1. 1. 4.*)

4. It is their Office (if it be not otherways provided for) to call the People to Church by Ringing of the Bell, to open and shut the Church Doors, to take care of the Lights, in the Meetings before day; and thus to Minister to the Church in these inferiour things, (*1 Sam. 3. 1.*)

5. To Teach Christian Children the Catechism in the Schools, (*Acts 18. 25, 26.*)

6. To attend their Overseers, or Superiours, when they go abroad, both that they may serve them, and that they may be also Witnesses every where of their Honest Conversation, and so they themselves may always be inured to Honesty, (*2 Tim. 4. 11. and 2. 3.*)

7. In case of necessity, there is also prescribed to them the Reading of the Holy Scripture, together with some Commentary, in a lesser Congregation; or even (if they can) they are to have a short Preaching committed to their Memory, and Prayers, which Godly People are sometimes content with.

### The DEACONS.

The Deacons are the more Adult *Acoluths*, or Disciples, now fitting themselves for the Ministry. The Ministers of the Brethren have these for their *Helpers*, after the Example of the Apostles, [*Acts 6. 2. and Phil. 1. 1.*] For tho they were at first ordain'd by the Apostles for the serving of Tables, yet it is evident, that they both Preached and Baptised, [as Steven, *Acts 6. 10.* and Philip, *Acts 8. 5, 12, 35, 38.*] and were promoted to a Superiour Degree, to wit, that of a Minister or Presbyter, [*1 Tim. 4. 13.*] Therefore this Degree of a Deacon was constantly kept up in the Primitive Church, as appears by the Canons of the Councils. And for this cause it is not fit to thrust it out of the Church, even tho with the rest it has been abused by Antichrist,

*The Brethren assign to the Deacons for their Office,*

1. To give themselves constantly & earnestly to the Study of Sacred Theology, & to prepare themselves aright for the Ministry, [*1 Tim. 3. 13.*]

2. To



2. To teach the *Youth* the Grounds of Religion both in the Church and School,

3. To be exercised in *Preaching* to the People.

4. To administer *Baptism*, as often as the Pastor shall order it. For even Christ permitted his Disciples to Baptize, before He committed to them the Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven (*Joh. 4. 2.*) as *Peter* also did his Disciples (*Acts 10: 48.*) and that the Deacons of the Apostles did Baptize, we have shewed already.

4. When the *Holy Supper* is Administred to a Numerous Congregation, and a sufficient Number of Ministers are not present, the *Deacons* also are employed to dispense not only the Cup, but the Bread: Yet so, as that the Minister only, who has the power of the Keyes, pronounces the *Absolution* to the People, and pre-miseth in a solemn manner the words of the Institution.

These then are the *Ministers Helpers*, the *Acoluths* and *Deacons*. The *Ministers Superiours*, or their Watchmen are the *Bishops* and *Co-Bishops*, or the *Seniors* and *Conseniors*; Who jointly make up the *Ecclesiastick Senate*, or as others call it the *Consistory* of the *Unity*.

#### Of the BISHOPS or SENIORS.

The *Bishop* is one remarkable for Age and the Gifts of God, chosen by the suffrage of all the Ministers, for the preserving of Order in the whole *Unity*, confirmed by the solemn Rite of *Ordination*, and so cloathed with the publick Authority, taking care that all others do their duty, every one in his own place, and that the work may go on without Scandal and Confusion. (*Acts 20. 28. 1 Pet. 5. 1. Council Carth. 4.*) Such Bishops, Four, Five or Six, as need requires use to be constituted, and every one has his *Diocess*, of a certain Number of Churches and Pastors assign'd him (*2 Cor. 10. 13. to the 16. Gal. 2. 9.*)

Their Dignity beyond the rest of the Ministers is not founded in the prerogative of Honours or Revenues, but of Labours, and care for others. He that is greatest among you, let him be even as the youngest, and he that is chief let him be as him that serveth, (*with Christ, Matth. 23. 11. Mark 10. 44. Luk 22. 26.*) And according to the Canons of the Apostles, a *Presbyter* and *Bishop* are one and the same; except that a *Bishop* signifies a Watchman or Superintendant. And there-

fore the Bishops of the Unity are in equal Honour among themselves : Excepting only, that one of them presides for Orders sake. All those being once chosen and appointed, do continue in the Office for term of Life, unless any one behave himself Unworthily.

*The common Duties of the Bishops are these.*

1. To take head to *Purity of Doctrine* and vigour of *Discipline*, throughout the whole Unity : And that by the Command of Christ who gave power to His Servants, and to every one his work, and he commanded the Porter to watch [ *Mark 13. 34.* ]
2. To take care that *Young Men* of good Inclinations may be diligently trained for the future use of the Church : As the *Prophets* train'd up their Sons, and *Gamaliel*, *Paul* at his feet ( *Acts 22. 3.* )
3. To ordain the *Acoluths*, the *Deacons* the *Ministers* and *Seniors*, every on to their severall degrees [ *Tit. 1. 5.* ]
4. To take faithful care of all the *Ministers*, *Deacons*, *Acoluths*, *Widows* and *Orphans* within his *Diocess*.
5. To have *Catalogues* of the *Churches* within his *Diocess*, to know their *Necessities*, and the *People*, at least the chief of them.
6. To appoint *Pastors* for the *Churches*, and to change them according as there is need, but not without the knowledge of the *Co-bishops*.
7. To visit the *Churches* of their *Diocess* every year ( of which afterwards in its place. )
8. To punish *Ministers* and *Pastors* transgressing their Duty ( but the *Excommunication* of a Minister belongs only to the whole *Synod* ) All, according to the power that God has given for *Edification*, not for *Destruction*, ( *2 Cor. 13. 10.* )
9. If any *persecution* or danger be coming on [ either on the whole *Unity*, or some one *Church* or some particular *Persons* ] to see how to prevent the danger, or at least how some help and comfort may be afforded those who are in danger, [ *Acts 2. 27.* ]
10. Every *Bishop* is obliged to take care of the *Library* of the *Unity*, and to see that it may be furnished as much as may be with profitable *Books*.



11. The care of the *Printing Press* that belongs to the Unity is incumbent on all alike : And the inspection of it, on him who lives next to it.

12. And because it is of dangerous consequence to allow to one or a few an absolute Liberty of Acting, every one of them is bound to submit to the Judgement not only of his *Colleagues*, but also of the *Seniors*; and to receive Admonition, Counsel and Rebuke. From this, as from a lawfull Judicatory of God, there is no appeal, but to a general Synod, from which it is not lawfull to appeal, but to him who has given the power of Judging to the Church.

*The Duties of the PRESIDENT.*

One among the *Bishops* has the Office of a *President*. Whole Duties are,

1. To call the *Ecclesiastick Senate* as often as there is need, but in the mean time with the knowledge and consent of his *Colleagues*.
2. After having acquainted them, when met together, with the occasion of their meeting, and warn'd them how vain and uncertain Mens thoughts are without God's help, to inflame them to Prayer, and therewith to consecrate their following work.
3. To enquire if the *Decrees* of the former Synod or Convocation, have been put in practice. Then to propose the affair, to be done in that Meeting, and to desire that every one may propose what he thinks worthy to be considered at that time : The Notary or Scribe Registering immediatly all the *Proposals*. Then every one gives his Opinion in order, beginning at the youngest. The *President* Collects and Ponders the Votes, and to what side the weight of the Reasons do incline, thither he directs the Conclusion; which is Registered by the Notary among the *Decrees*.
4. It belongs also to the *President* to indict a *General Assembly*, when there is need for it; to appoint some to provide for the outward Necessities; and in the Assembly to be the first leader of all good Order.

*The Duties of the Notary of the Unity.*

The *Clerkship* uses to be intrusted to one of the *Seniors*. Whose Office it is,

1. To Write in Registers the Acts of the Assemblies.
2. To be well acquainted with the Acts and Writs of the Unity.

3. To take notice of the Writings publish'd by Adversaries, and if there be need for an Answer, and the Senate appoint it, to write Replys, and submit them to the Censure of the Senate.

4. If he observe any defect in the Writings of the Unity, to acquaint the Senate with it, and to supply it according to their Unanimous appointment after due deliberation.

5. To take care, that nothing be published by any in the Unity of their own private motion. In a word, to know the Causes and Reasons of the Books that have been or are to be published.

#### The Office of the CONSENIORS.

Every one of the Seniors have join'd to them two or three Conseniors for helpers: Whom Antiquity called *Chor-Episcopi*. Their Office is,

1. With the Seniors to make up the Ecclesiastick Senate or Consistory.

2. Before the rest of the Ministers every where to see that there be good Order, and whatsoever they shall observe worthy of Correction, to acquaint their Superior with it.

3. To take care, That the Laudable Laws, Statutes and Customs be observed by all, and to go before all both by word and example. ( *Phil. 4: 3. 2 Tim. 4: 2.* )

4. To look out for Persons fit for the Degrees of the Ministry. ( *Tit. 1. 5.* )

5. To appoint where, and in what manner, and how any of the Ministers and Deacons may labour profitably, and accordingly what is to be entrusted unto every one [ *Acts 16. 4.* ]

6. To exercise Discipline conjunctly with the Bishop upon the Ministers.

7. To visite the Churches with him, or without him, when he shall appoint, and such as he shall appoint.

8. To examine the Acoluths, Deacons and Ministers that are call'd to be ordain'd, and to present those who are examined with a just testimony to the Seniors ( *1 Tim. 3: 10.* )

9. To take heed how the Neighbouring Pastors of their District ( especially those recommended peculiarly to their inspection ) do their Duty : And if they shall observe any light miscarriage, it is their part to correct them ; but as to the great and Scandalous ones



ones, they are to acquaint the *Seniors* of them, as soon as possible:  
( 1 *Thes.* 5: 14: )

10: To keep faithfully the secrets of their *Counsels*, ( *Pov.* 20: 19: )

## C H A P. II.

### *Of the Synods, and the Rites of Ordination.*

**W**E use to indict *Synods*, either *general* or *particular* ones, for weighty Causes, to provide namely for the *Necessities*, either of the whole *Unity*, or of any one *Diocese*.

A *General Assembly* is held almost every Third or Fourth Year, where all the *Seniors* and *Conseniors*, *Pastors* and *Ministers*, as also the *Deacons* and *Acoluths*, yea and the *Patrons* of Churches (especially the neighbouring ones) are present. And that,

1. For renewing and confirming of *Brotherly Love* and *Concord*,  
[ 1 *Cor.* 16. 14. 1 *Pet.* 4. 8. ]
2. For raising up and strengthening the *Spirits* of all in the *Work of the Lord*, [ *Rom.* 1. 11, 12. ]
3. For restoring the *Vigour* of *Order* and *Discipline*, in case there be a Disorder in it any where, either fallen out, or like to fall out,  
[ 1 *Cor.* 1. 10. *Eph.* 4. 10. ]
4. Sometimes also to thrust out such as are *Scandalous* out of the *Ministry*, or solemnly again to receive such as are *Penitent*.
5. To ordain *Ministers*, according to the *Degree* that is then needful.
6. To see if there is any thing needful to be amended that concerneth the whole *Unity*, and how to help it.

Such *General Assemblies* are not always called to one certain place, but to different places, both in *Moravia* and *Bobemia*, ( *Poland*, because it was at a distance, sent only *Delegates* to the *Assemblies*, as sometimes such were sent from *Bobemia* to the *Assemblies* in *Poland*, ) in this Order.

1. All who are call'd come at the Day and Place appointed.
2. Every one lodgeth in the Place appointed for him: For that useth to be timeously provided for.
3. In the Evening, at the Ringing of the Bell, all meet in the  
Church,

*Church*, Thanks are given unto GOD, and the *Seniors* lovingly like Fathers salute their Guests.

4. Then they *Sup* according to the Order of the *Tables* and the *Attendants*, and that ( as in the following Days ) modestly and in the Fear of the Lord, having Godly and Friendly Conversation, [ *Eph.* 4. 29. and 5. 4. ] Some of the *Conseniors* are appointed to order all: And also, as they do every day thereafter, to visit and salute the Guests.

5. Next Morning, one of the *Seniors* or *Conseniors* preacheth, and so every day while the *Assembly* sits: There are also Afternoon and Evening *Prayers*, with an Admonition still from the Scriptures, about what may serve for their common Edification, or the present State of Things.

6. The *Ministers* being met, remain all day in the *Church*, ( as do the *Deacons* and *Acoluths* in their own place, ) being taken up about Matters recommended to them by the *Seniors*.

7. The *Seniors* also, in a peculiar Meeting, do deliberate about, and determine in those things which are proposed to them by the *Ministers*, or *Churches*, or *Patrons*, or what else comes under Deliberation: Yet, in greater Matters, they do it not, without the Consent of the *Ministers*.

8. When ever there is need of filling a vacant place in the *Senate*, after having given themselves to Fasting and Prayer, all and every one of them give their Vote for some Person, and deliver it in sealed Papers to the *Seniors*.

9. Persons also fit for the *Ministry* are sought out among the *Deacons*, and what the *Ministers* know of every one of them that is Praise worthy or not, they mark it, and transmit it to the *Seniors*.

10. They being honoured with a *Good Testimony*, are examined by the *Seniors* and *Conseniors*.

11. The *Ordination* to every Degree is gone about publicly, of which afterwards.

12. But the *Holy Communion* is always celebrated in the General Assembly, [ *Acts* 20. 7. ] for the renewing of mutual Love, and Joy in GOD. Where as many of the *Ministers* of the Church as are present, and the *Patrons* and *People*, do communicate with Joy and Gladness,

13. About



13. About the end of the Assembly, several Exhortations are given, (*Acts 20. 25.*) For Example, *That every one may direct all done in this Assembly for the Glory of GOD, and their own Edification: That every one may walk worthy in the Vocation wherewith he is called, and may go before others, over whom he is Overseer, in a good Example, that the Ministry be not evil spoken of.* There are added sometimes particular Dehortations from some Scandals and Vices, with Divine Promises or Threatnings intermixed. At last, with the Blessing, and Thanksgiving, and Prayers, (*that hereafter GOD may grant happy days to his Church, and make his Work go on prosperously for his own Glory,*) the Assembly is dismissed in Peace. With a Warning, that, by the way, they behave themselves Piously, Modestly, and with Concord, (*Gen. 45. 24.*) And that, being return'd home, they do, in the Name of the *Seniors*, salute the Churches, Patrons, and those of their own House, and assure them of their Faithful Pastoral and Fatherly Care, and their Remembrance of them in their Prayers to GOD, and their constant readiness to serve them in their Salvation, (*Rom. 16. throughout, Heb. 13. Ephes. 1. 16. Phil. 1. 3, 4. Coloss. 1. 3.*)

14. The Acts of the Assembly are Registred, a Copy of which every one of the *Seniors* keeps by him.

*Particular Synods* use to be called of a less Number of *Seniors* and *Ministers*, upon sudden Necessities, which cannot admit of a Delay till the General Assembly, as also, when perhaps the Affair of the whole Unity is not concerned, but of one *District*, or of a particular Church or Person. Nevertheless the Acts of every particular Synod are immediatly sent to the absent *Bishops*, for the sake of Holy Unanimity.

But because the Ordinations of *Ministers* are performed in the General Assemblies, we come next to shew, after what manner these are gone about.

Now the Ordination is of

1. *Acoluths.*

1. *Deacons.*

3. *Ministers.*

4. *Conseniors.*

5. *Seniors.*

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*The Ordination of ACOLUTHS.*

Each *Pastor* among us is obliged to bring up in his own House one, two, three, or more Boys, Children of good Parents, and to educate and train them up for the Ministry. Among whom the elder, that they may be the more enflam'd with the Love of the Ministry, are brought to the Assemblies, and undergoing there a Trial, those who are judged worthy of further Care and Promotion, that they may be sensible that they are bound to the Church, are honoured with the first Degree of a *Vocation*, to wit, that they may be called *Acoluths*. Their *Ordination* is after this manner.

1. There is a Sermon upon a proper Subject, as concerning the Imitation of Christ, the calling of the Seventy Disciples, the Sons of the Prophets, &c.
2. They are called out by Name in Order, and they present themselves before the Church.
3. They are ask'd before the whole Assembly, whether they are willing to consecrate themselves for the Service of the Church? Whether they promise Obedience?
4. Their Duties are read out unto them, of which above.
5. They promise, with uplifted Hand, the Observation of these things.
6. The former *Acoluths* receive them into Fellowship, by giving them the Right Hand.
7. All is concluded with Prayers, Blessing, and a Divine Hymn.

*The Ordination of DEACONS.*

The *Deacons* are chosen out of the more Adult *Acoluths* after this manner.

1. They are examined by the *Seniors*, whether they do give themselves up wholly to Christ and the Church, and what Progress they have made in the Study of Theology, (1 Tim. 3. 10. Luk. 9. 62.)
2. They are call'd out by Name before the whole Assembly, and their Duties are read unto them, out of 1 Tim. 3. 8.
3. They engage themselves by a Vow to Christ and the Church.
4. Prayers are put up for them, and he that ordains confirms them by Imposition of Hands, (Acts 6. 6.)

5. The



5. The New Deacons give unto the Seniors and Ministers the Right Hand of Holy Obedience, and the former Deacons give to them the Right Hand of Fellowship.

6. The Action is concluded with a Blessing.

*The Ordination of MINISTERS.*

1. When *Ministers* are to be ordain'd in an *Assembly*, each Pastor, who is to bring his Deacon, or Deacons, along with him, acquaints his Church, that is the Elders, or the Censors of Manners: Who, by their Letters to the Assembly, give a *Testimonial* of the Life and Conversation of his Deacon, (or Deacons) and his Proficiency in the Gift of Preaching, and declare, whether they look upon him, as worthy of the Degree of the Ministry. Publick Testimonies also of their Honest Extract use to be requir'd, that in every thing they may be without Blame.

2. In the *Assembly* follows the Trial of those, who are to be ordained, and that a three-fold one, [ 1 Tim. 5. 22 ] For first the Names of those, who are to be ordain'd, are given in to the Censure of the Ministers, met together in the Church. Where the Testimonies and Judgments concerning each of them, (whether for or against them) are written down by chosen Notaries, and remitted to the Seniors.

3. The second Trial is gone about by the *Conseniors*, who, admitting three or four of them together, examine them, what Progress each of them has made in *Theology*, how they are nourish'd by the Words of Faith, [ 1 Tim. 4. 6. ] Of the Purity also of their Intention to serve GOD and the Church, [ 1 Tim. 3. 3. ] And finally, as to their Age, and the Firmness of their Judgment, ( 1 Tim. 3. 6. )

4. Then those, who are judged to be fit for the Ministry, are sent each of them to each *Bishop*, for the Examination of their Conscience: Where, the Weight and Majesty of the Pastoral Office being laid before them, they are asked, whether they yield themselves up to Christ, with a pure Conscience, without any respect of Lucre, Honour, or Earthly Advantage, ( 1 Tim. 3. 9. ) If there have been any thing observed in any of them that is less becoming, they are moved to a Correction of their Manners by powerful Exhortations, ( 2 Tim. 2. 14. Tit. 1. 7, 8. Col. 3. 8. ) And thereafter,

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by several Consolations, are raised into the Hope of the Divine Aid, ( 1 John 3. 21. Heb. 3. 1. )

5. Next day, they proceed to the *Ordination*: The preceeding day being set aside for Fasting and Solemn Prayers for the Necessities of the Church, ( Acts 13. 2, 3. )

6. The *Assembly* being met, and a Divine Hymn sung, there is a solemn Sermon had concerning the *Pastoral Office*. Which being ended, he who ordains comes forth,

1. And first reads a Sacred Text.

2. Then he acquaints the *Congregation*, that some Persons are to be called unto, and confirmed in the Function of the *Holy Ministry*: And turning his Discourse to the *Candidates* themselves, he warns them, that being call'd, they obediently present themselves before GOD and the Church.

3. Then one of the *Conseniors* comes forth, and recites out of a Catalogue the Names of those that are to be ordained, who come forth in Order.

4. He who is to ordain asks them, whether they come with a willing Mind to serve GOD and the Church.

5. They modestly owning it, somethings relating to this Order of consecrating is read out of the *Apostolick Canon*: That seeing they follow the Steps of the Apostles, they may be the more firmly perswaded of the Divine Call, ( 1 Tim. 3. 1, &c. )

6. He who is to *Ordain* goes on to enquire, if they be worthy of so high an Office, lest by them any Reproach and Dishonour come upon the Church, ( 1 Tim. 3. 7. ) And then two of the *Conseniors* come forth, and testify before the whole *Congregation* of their honest Extract, of their being endued with sound Doctrine, and that they are of an Unblameable Life, and worthy of having the Office of Evangelists committed to them.

7. They are commanded, (humbling themselves on their Knees) to call upon the Prince of Pastors *Jesus Christ*: And presently, all the *Congregation* humbling themselves, pray for them.

8. The Duties of the *Pastoral Office* are read unto them.

9. They bind themselves by an Oath of Fidelity to GOD and the Church, that they shall persevere within those Limits unto the end.

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10. They are confirmed by the *Imposition of the Hands* of the Bishops, as many as are present, with the Invocation of the Name of Christ upon them, that he may be pleased to take them into the Number of his Faithful Servants, and replenish them with the Gifts of his Spirit. In the mean time the Conseniors, the Ministers, and all the People, humbling themselves also on their Knees, sing, *Come Holy Ghost, &c.*

11. *Exhortations* are made to the New Ministers to labour, and to be patient in Adversities, which they may look for, with Promises of an Everlasting Reward, after having faithfully finish'd their Labours here, ( *2 Tim. 2. 3. Dan. 12. 3. 1 Pet. 5. 4.* ) In return to which, they cheerfully offer unto the Seniors and Conseniors the Right Hand of Obedience, and to the Ministers ( and to the Deacons also, in Testimony of Respect ) the Right Hand of Fellowship, ( *Gal. 2. 9. 1 Pet. 5. 5.* ) the Church in the mean time singing a Hymn composed out of the 133 Psalm.

12. Finally the Action uses to be concluded with the Holy Communion, to the Joy of all.

#### *Of the Inauguration of the MINISTERS.*

The Ministers who are ordain'd with us, do not presently flie to the Administration of Sacred Things, when and where they please: But Visitations are appointed, immediatly after the Assembly, thro' those Churches, where they have New Ministers. Where he that Visits,

1. Declares the Care that the *Prince of Pastors* Christ has of his Church, and exhorts them to a thankful Acknowledgment of this Blessing.

2. He tells them, that N. N. is lawfully chosen, called, and ordained, that it may appear, that he has not thrust in himself, ( *Jer. 17. 16.* ) but has come being called: And that the Faithful may own them as Labourers, whom GOD sends forth into his Harvest, ( *Matth. 9. 38.* )

3. He tells, that he is now to bring forth the first Fruits of the Sacred Office, in the full Administration of the *Keyes of Christ*, and of the *Holy Supper*, and commands him to come forth, and speak to the Church.

4. This Minister having acknowledged, that he humbly obeys the *Divine Call*, and recommending himself to the Prayers of the

Church, (Eph. 6. 19, 20.) he falls down upon his Knees, as does also the whole Congregation, (he who visits admonishing them so to do,) and Prayers are put up for him.

5. All of them being raised into a Hope of their Prayers being heard, he who *Visits*, taking the Minister by the Hand, brings him to the Altar, (or to the Lord's Table,) gives him the *Book of the Rituals*, and appoints him to enter upon the Administration of the *Keyes of Christ* and of the *Sacraments*: The People looking on, and for the most part Weeping. (For those Rites are retained not out of an Opinion of Necessity, but to shadow forth in some manner the Dignity of the Ministry, and to excite a Reverence to this OEconomy of Christ.)

6. The Communion being administered by the New Minister, he who visits concludes the Action, by pronouncing the Blessing on him, and on the whole Church.

The whole Care of any Church is not immediatly committed to the New Ministers, but for the space of one or two Years, they are left to the Pastors for *Collegues*, till they be better fitted for the Direction of Mens Consciences, and the Necessity of some Church require their Help. If any of them in the mean time resolve to marry honestly, this uses not to be done without the Advice and Consent of the Seniors.

*Of the Manner of Instituting Ministers in Churches for Pastors.*

When there is occasion of placing a Pastor in a Church, (and in like manner, when upon occasions Pastors are changed,) it is done after this manner.

1. With us, no *Magistrate* or *Church* do seek or call a Pastor to themselves, neither do *Ministers* seek after Places, but to what place every one is appointed, thither he betakes himself, and that Church receives him for its Pastor. For this is the Province of the Seniors, to see what Pastor each Church stands in need of, and where every Minister can do the Work of the Lord profitably.

2. Whensoever therefore a new Pastor is presented to a Church, he having preach'd, the *Visitor* comes forth, and declares that upon mature deliberation of the Seniors he is given for a Pastor to that Church, Counseling them to receive him as the Servant of *Jesus*

*Christ,*



*Christ*, ( *Phil. 2. 29.* ) He likewise Exhorts the Minister to do his duty diligently, and to watch over the L O R D's Flock which is committed to him: There is a Protestation made on both sides, of the Pastour to the People, and of the People (by one of the Elders) unto the Pastour. He promiseth Pastoral Care, and they to obey him as the Minister of Jesus Christ ( *Heb. 13. 17.* ) which is confirmed also by the Elders giving of their hands, in the presence and Name of all the People; and all these are Sealed on both sides by Prayers and Wishes of the Divine Blessing.

3. *The Congregation* being dismissed, the Predecessor delivers to the Successor in the presence of the *Visitor* and the Elders, a Catalogue of the People, and all the Utensils of that place, both Sacred and Domestick: And with all, if there be any thing to be divided of External Goods, it is amicably Transacted between them.

*In what things the MINISTERS are bound to ask the Advice of their SENIORS.*

Every pastor set over a particular Church has, power over the Flock committed unto him in all things that concern the Pastoral Office: excepting that,

1. In the more weighty and less usual Cases, which occur sometimes to those who are employed in the Direction of Mens Consciences, they are ordered to do nothing without Consulting the Senior: both that they may learn not to trust in themselves alone, and that what is done with the consent of others, may tend more to Edification:

2. And even abstracting from those Cases, every Pastour is bound to acquaint his Senior, from time to time (at least twice a Month) with his own state, and that of his Church, and that either personally, or by writing: Whereby the other, being acquainted with what is done every where, may the more rightly discharge the duty of a Watchman.

3. When a *Magistrate* or *Minister* dies, the Senior useth to be acquainted with it, that by his Order some Ministers with some one of the Conseniors for Decencies sake, may be call'd to the Interment.

4. And

4. And because the *Visitations* (of which afterwards) are for the most part gone about in the Summer time, each of the Pastors useth to ask the Senior before *Easter*, *Whitsunday* and in *Autumn*, if he shall Celebrate the Holy Communion, or wait for the coming of the Visitors.

*The Ordination of the* **CONSENIORS.**

When there is need to fill up the *Senate* of the Church; there are chosen out from among the Ministers, as many as there is need for, of Men Eminent beyond the rest for Knowledge, Piety and a good Example: And that by the Suffrage of the *Ministers* and *Conseniors*. Every one as he judges this, or the other Man, to be fitted for the Charge, he delivers, or if absent, sends unto the *Seniors* his suffrage for him in a Note under Seal. They having Unseal'd the Notes, confirm into the Office of *Conseniors* such as they find chosen by Suffrage (premissing first an admonition from the Scriptures concerning the end of this Office, and other necessary things) and that after this manner.

Every one of them being call'd out by Name, present themselves before the Assembly: They are ask'd, if they offer and promise more abundant labour unto GOD and the Church. To which they consenting, the Duties of their future Office are read unto them. Then the Prayers of the whole Church are put up for them, and they get imposition of hands. Then they offer the right hand of Obedience to the *Seniors*; and of Fellowship to the *Conseniors*, as the other Ministers do to them, in testimony of their obedience. And finally, the Action is concluded with Prayer for the Divine Benediction.

*The Ordination of the* **BISHOPS or SENIORS.**

One of the *Seniors* being remov'd by Death, a *General Assembly*, or, if of late there has been one, a particular one, is called as soon as may be. But all the *Conseniors* are conven'd, and a part of the *Ministers*, the rest sending their Suffrages. There then,

1. One day is set apart for *Fasting* and *Prayer*: That GOD may be pleased to fill up the breach, and shew whom He has chosen (*Am. 9. 11. Act. 1. 24.*)

3. The



2. The Picture of a good Bishop is held forth from the Scriptures in a peculiar Sermon; and all of them are warned, that (without respect of Persons) they may look out from among them for such a Person.

3. The Congregation being dismissed, every one writes down his Vote, as well the Ministers, as the Conseniors and Seniors (yet without conferring or communicating their Opinions to one another, but according as every Mans Conscience dictates to him) and having seal'd their Notes, they put them all together.

4. The Seniors being alone, unseal the Notes, and him whom they find to be desired by the Plurality of Votes, they firmly believe to be call'd of God; but they do not make it known to any body.

5. The next day, the Congregation being again met, after Prayer for the Grace of the Holy Spirit, he who *Ordains* stepping forth tells them their Prayers are heard, and that GOD has now declared how he will make up the breach of the Church.

6. While all are waiting and looking who it shall be, he who ordains gives warning, that whosoever shall be Named, do not refuse obedience to God's call, but that he present himself resolutely before GOD and the Church. Then another of the Bishops stepping forth calls him by Name.

7. Being call'd he presents himself, and is asked, *Whether he acknowledges and receives this Call as truly the call of God? and if he offers his Labours unto GOD and the Church readily, and with a willing Mind?* (1/. 6. 8.)

8. When he consent: His duties are read unto him from the *Apostolick Canon*.

9. Then with a clear voice he obliges himself to GOD and the Church to do his Duty Faithfully, Sincerely and constantly.

10. All the Congregation fall down upon their Knees and pray that God would ratifie in Heaven, what is done in His Name on Earth, and increase His Gifts unto His Servant, and Replenish him with the Spirit of Wisdom and Strength for so weighty a Charge.

11. Presently, (the Congregation still kneeling, and singing, *Come Holy Spirit*) the Bishops by imposition of hands, and calling on the Name of God do confirm him.

12. The

12. The *Ordination* being thus performed, the *Bishops* who are present, do in the presence of the whole Church, receive their new fellow Bishop into their Number, by mutual embraces, and giving him the Right hand of fellowship; and the *Consensors and Ministers* (in Name likewise of those who are absent) by giving the hand promise Obedience.

13. At last the Assembly is dissolved with a Sacred Hymn with Joy and Gladness.

### C H A P. III.

#### *Of the Order of the Ministry, Or the manner of the publick Administration of Sacred Things.*

*Here shall be set down our Ordinary manner.*

I. **O**F Preaching the word of GOD.

II. **O**F Administering Baptism.

III. *Of receiving Novices into the Pastoral care.*

IV. *Of Celebrating the Holy Communion.*

V. *Of Solemnizing Marriage.*

VI. *Of the Burrying the Dead.*

VII. *Finally, our Customs about Festival Dayes, Fasts and Alms-givings.*

#### THE ORDER concerning the preaching of GOD's Word.

Seeing the Word of God is the chief part of the Ministry to which the Sacraments are annexed only as Seals, ( *Mark. 16. 15. 1 Cor. 17. Rom. 4. 11.* ) it is therefore the chief care of the Ministers of the Unity to teach the same, and that not only upon the Lords dayes and yearly Festivals, but also on working days, and as oft as there is occasion by Burials, Marriages or otherwise.

*On the Lords Days* ( as being wholly set a part for Divine Worship ) the People meet four several times to hear GODS word twice Before, and twice Afternoon. In the first Sermon Text chosen out of the *Prophets* are explain'd: In the Second ( which we call the chief one ) Texts out of the *Gospels*: In the Afternoon



out of the *Epistles* of the *Apostles*; in the Evening the *Sacred Scriptures* are read in order, with some *Doctrinal Observations*. Likewise in the Summer time (beginning from *Easter*) there is a fifth Sermon added at Noon: Where the Youth are conven'd, and for their benefit the *Catechetical Doctrine* is most plainly handled, and each of them in particular Catechised. Their Parents also and others are present, both that having taken some refreshment they may praise GOD; and that they may be present at the Instruction of their Children and Servants.

The form observed in those Sacred Meetings is this. The People being met, a Divine Song or Hymn is Sung: (at the chief Sermon and in the Afternoon there is also a Psalm:) then the *Preacher*, having first prayed with the People or alone, does from the Pulpit read and explain a *Text*, with respect always to the common place of that week. For all the *heads of Religion* are so ordered to be explained throughout the Lord's Dayes, as that they may be gone thorow yearly, as the Printed *Index of those common places, and of the Texts which serve for the explaining of them, and of the Sacred Songs do make appear*. Which was drawn up for the keeping of Unanimity thereby thro' all the Churches, but not to be a Law, from which they might not recede: For it was free to a faithful Pastor, when he saw it needful, either to choose to himself a Sacred Text more adapted to time, Persons and occasion; or from the ordinary Texts to digress to seasonable Doctrines, Dehortations and Consolations: But this rather was a Law, to avoid long Sermons, that they might not breed a weariness in the hearers. The *Morning Sermon* therefore was not above an Hour, reckoning Singing and all, and so it was as to the Afternoons Sermon, and that of the Week day. In the Forenoon an Hour was allowed to the Exposition of the Gospel: The Noon and the Evening were not above half an Hour, at length every Sermon was ended with Prayer, the Blessing, and Singing.

When the Noon and Afternoons Sermons are ended, the Boyes and Girls stay and are examined by the *Preacher* (some one of the Elders assisting as to the first; and of the *Matrons*, as to the Second) and what attention they have given that day to the word of GOD what each has observed. But in *Lent* time on *Wednesdays* and

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Fridays

*Fridays*, there are also Meetings in the Evening called *Salve* (from the Song, *save us Jesus King of Heaven*, where the *Mystery* of our *Redemption* is more carefully inculcated, especially to the Youth.

The manner that is received among us of *Preaching* GOD's word, is *Simple* in Scripture language, mostly without the paint of Humane Eloquence; that the *Doctrine* may be preserved wholesome and without blame, that every Man may be made perfect in *Christ Jesus*, in those things which pertain to *Righteousness*, and thoroughly furnished to every good work (1 Cor. 2. 4. 1 Pet. 4. 11. Tit. 1. 9. and 2. 7. 2 Tim. 3. 17.) Hence our Fathers had distinct Sermons, some for *Novices*, others for *Proficients*, others for the *Perfect*, others for those who lived in *Calibacy*, others for the *Married*. And that this did not want its Fruit is evident.

## II. The FORM OF BAPTISM.

They administer *Baptism* after the Example of the Primitive Church.

1. The Children of the *Faithfull*, some daves after they are born, are presented to be ingrafted by Baptism into *Christ* and the Church (Gen. 17. 12. Mark. 16. 13.)

2. A *Sacred Text* is read: seeing all things, and especially the Sacraments are sanctified by the word of God and by Prayer, (1 Tim. 4. 5.)

3. It is made appear that the *Covenant of Grace* extends also unto the seed of the faithful, Gen. 17. 19. Act. 2. 39.)

4. The *Parents* and the *Sureties*, do subscribe to this same Covenant by a publick profession of Faith, and that also in Name of the Child (Act. 8. 37.)

5. The *Parents* being ask'd by the Minister, do receive the *Witnesses*, whom they have call'd, to be *God-fathers* and *God-mothers*, giving them a right to bring up their Child in the *Christian Faith and Religion*, and the whole *Affair of the Covenant entered into with God*: And withal of admonishing and reprovng themselves if they shall be found negligent in the duty of instructing their Children. On the other hand, the *Sureties* do promise their readiness in this matter, and oblige themselves to do their duty diligently towards the Child that is to be Baptised, especially if it happen that the *Parents* die.

6. Then



6. Then all turning unto GOD the Father, pray for the cleansing this Child from its *Original corruption*, by the blood of Christ, *Regeneration* by the Holy Spirit, the Sealing of this internal Grace by *Baptism*, and the receiving him into the Number of the Elect.

7. Prayer being ended, the Minister giving the Child a Name, (at the will of the Parent) Baptises him according to the Institution of Christ, *in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, with pure and simple Water.

8. At last an *Exhortation* is made to the Father and the Sureties, that being mindful of their Obligations, they continue so long and so diligently to instruct the Child, till that he being piously Educated and carefully trained up, they can present him before the Church with Honour, and recommend him to the *Pastoral care* of the Ministers. Finally the Action is closed with Prayer for the Divine Blessing.

#### THE FORM of CONFIRMATION, OR receiving Novices.

With us the *Pastoral care* of the Ministers is extended only to those, who do voluntarily submit themselves to the Unity and its Order, and commend themselves to the care of the Pastor: And this according to the Apostles precept: *Feed the Flock of God, which is among you* ( 1 Pet. 5. 2. ) That therefore the Ministers might know who are properly committed unto them, and might apply themselves with the greater freedom and confidence to those who had committed themselves to their care, the custom of receiving *Novices*, which from the Primitive times had been observed in the Church, was again profitably brought in. For the Apostles received only those, who first gave their own selves unto the Lord, and thereafter unto them, by the will of God ( 2 Cor. 8. 5. ) But with us the Rites used in receiving those who are grown up and come from elsewhere, are different from what we use in receiving those who are born and Baptised among our selves, and so sufficiently instructed in the Christian Religion.

We ask the Adult, *Why they desire to apply to us, is it for that they are fully persuaded of the truth of our Doctrine, and of the usefulness of our Order and Discipline?* If we find that he understands our Doctrine and Discipline, and knows aright the grounds of Salvation, and is

blameless in his Life, we presently receive him. If otherwise, it is delayed: That both we may take more heed to him, and he to us ( 1 Joh. 4. 1. Rom. 12. 2. ) Now such are received not publicly, (unless there be weighty reasons for it) but privately before the Eldership.

And they are further Asked,

1. *If they promise obedience to God in this Church?* Namely by doing the whole will of God, in the strength of the Covenant of Grace.
2. *If they are ready also to yield Obedience to the Ministers of the Church in Christs stead:* To wit leaving to them the full power of teaching, admonishing, reproofing, correcting them? especially if they shall happen to fall into any Scandalous Excesses.
3. *If they have composed their Minds to suffer reproaches, and persecutions for Christ and his Truth?* because all that would live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution ( Act. 14. 22. 2 Tim. 3. 12. )
4. *Then they are warned, that they cleave constantly to the Truth which they acknowledge, even unto Death,* ( Rev. 2. 10. Phil. 3. 16 ) and having by lifting up the hand promised obedience ( not to the Minister as a Man, but to Christ and his word, ) they being received, are allowed access to the Holy Communion with the other Faithful, and confidently to have recourse to their Pastors in all the necessities of their Consciences.

But the Younger having been taught the grounds of Religion at home by their Parents and Sureties, or in the Schools by the Masters, they are publicly delivered to the care of the Pastor in the Church, before the receiving of the Lords Supper [ and most usually about the time of the Visitations by the Seniors themselves ] after this manner.

1. The Words of Christ are read, *Come unto me all ye, &c.* [ Matth. 11. 28. ] with a short Exposition of them.
2. The *Boyes* and the *Girles* who are to be received, and who have been often before examined by the Pastor, are placed in Order in the midst of the Church.
3. Then they are asked, if they are willing to renew the Covenant into which they entred with GOD in *Baptism*, [ Deut. 29. 10, &c. Jos. 24. 22. 1/4. 44. 5. ]

4. They



4. They consenting, the *Heads* of the Covenant are explained according to the Form prescribed by the Apostle, [Tit. 2. 11, 12, 13.] and they are commanded publickly before the Church to *renounce the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, &c.*

5. A Profession of their *Faith* is required of them : All of them therefore, with a clear Voice, rehearse the *Apostolick Creed*.

6. Then falling on their Knees, the Minister going before, they pray unto GOD, that he may forgive them the Sins of their Youth, and strengthen them to all the *good Pleasure of his Will* by his Holy Spirit : Which all the People likewise do, praying for them.

7. After Prayers, to those young ones, as also to the whole Church, the *Absolution* is pronounced, and the *Priviledge of the Sons of GOD* in partaking of the Table of the Lord.

8. There is added at last, the Apostolick Rite of *Imposition of Hands*, [Matth. 10. 16. Heb. 6. 2. Acts 8. 16, 17.] together with the Invocation of the Name of GOD upon them, for confirming the Hope of Heavenly Grace. ( *Consider what Advice Erasmus gives about this Rite of Confirmation, in his Preface to the Paraphrase of Matth.* )

#### IV. THE FORM OF Celebrating the Holy Supper.

The *Holy Supper* is usually celebrated four times a Year. Not that it may not be oftner done, ( for it uses to be oftner, when the need of the Faithful requires it, ) but this is for Uniformity. When the *Holy Communion* draws near, great care is taken to dispose all worthily to partake of it.

1. Two or even three Weeks before, Warning is given of that Holy Action, and all admonished of their Duty to examine themselves. There is a *Sermon* also premised of the End, Dignity and Use of that *Mystery*, with diverse Exhortations; there are also other intermedial Sermons about the same time, aiming at the same thing. Then, throughout the said days, the Examination and Censure of Mens Consciences is gone about, after this manner.

Before the giving Warning of the Celebration of the Holy Supper, the Pastor calls the Eldership, and asks, *If the Holy Communion may be appointed against such and such a time* : If there be any Impediments, then he enquires into the Life and Conversation of

of the People, if any Scandal be risen any where? If there be any Person who they judge has need to be instructed, admonish'd, or reprov'd in any matter? [Heb. 12. 12, 13. 1 Cor. 1. 11.] Therefore, according as it is seasonable, the Pastor both gives Warning of the Communion, and examines Mens Consciences. Each Master of a Family comes with those of his Family to the Pastor on the day and hour appointed, and there they are examined, how diligent they are in going about Divine Worship, both in publick and private? If they have Daily Prayers at home, with Singing of Psalms, and reading of the Scriptures? Then they are examined, the younger (especially) how they understand this or that thing? Then, as to their Life, if they adorn the Doctrine of our GOD by an Honest Conversation? How the Children obey their Parents, and the Servants their Masters? So, as to the Master and Mistress of the Family, if they go before them in a good Example? If they be careful to train them up to Piety and a good Life? Where there are not wanting occasions of some profitable Instruction, Admonition, Dehortation. He who is found not to have behav'd himself as becomes, is not warranted to come to the Holy Communion, unless he promise earnestly to amend. But if he superadd Contumacy, he is altogether suspended and remov'd from it, until he submit his stiff Neck to Christ's Yoke. That this ought to be done, appears from the Example of the Apostles, and the power conferred by Christ on them and their Successors [2 Cor. 10. 4, 5, 6, 8.]

2. Before the Action it self, all are excited unto a Spiritual Hunger and Thirst by the preaching of GOD's Word, [Acts 20. 7, 11.]

3. Then, by fervent Prayers imploring the Mercy of GOD, they beg the Pardon of their Sins, and to be fitted for the worthy partaking of the Table of the Lord.

4. Then presently, in Christ's Name, Pardon of Sins, (Absolution) and the Priviledge of the Sons of GOD, is most solemnly pronounced to them in the Name of the Holy Trinity, (Acts 13. 38, 39. 1 John 2. 12. 2 Cor. 13. 13.)

5. The Minister rehearseth the Words of the New Testament, breaking the Bread in the prelence of the People, and taking the Cup in his Hand. Then he adds a short Exposition of the Words, declaring, that this Mystery, according to Christ's Mind, does not ly in the Elements, but he teaches them to lift up their Hearts. At last,



In Christ's Name, he invites to this Holy Feast all those who are worthy prepared for it.

6. Therefore, with due Reverence, first the *Pastor*, with such Ministers of the Church as are present, draw near, then the *Magistrates*, then the *Church Elders*, and thereafter the rest of the *People*, with respect always to their Age, so as that first the *Men*, then the *Youth*, then the *Boys* approach, one or two of the *Elders* taking care that there be no Indecency, and that no Stranger or profane Person do thrust himself in, then lastly the *Women*. In taking the Holy Supper, we do all humble our selves on our Knees, not out of an Idolatrous Superstition, but that thro' the State of the Time we could not do otherwise, (for our Fathers, in the Year 1494, received the Communion standing, but a grievous Persecution being raised there upon, they were forced to leave it off,) Besides that this way of humbling our selves upon our Knees, being used by Holy Persons in a Holy Manner, does encrease Devotion, and Humility before GOD, and consequently makes us rejoice with Trembling. In the mean time, all the People praise GOD with *Hymns* concerning Christ's Passion, and all his saving Benefits.

7. In the last place, *Thanks* are given unto GOD, (all the Congregation falling down again upon their Knees,) they are exhorted to the Study of Godliness: And the Divine Blessing being pronounced, the Congregation is dismissed in Peace, they testifying their Gratitude by Aims to the Poor.

#### V. THE ORDER OF SOLEMNIZING MARRIAGE.

1. We exhort those, who think of entering upon a *Married State*, that they do not go about it without consulting their Parents, and Friends, and the Pastor, whose Duty it is to beg of GOD a happy Event to it.

2. We forbid wholly all *Clandestine Marriages*, and they are censured who do otherwise.

3. The Solemnization of *Marriage* is done publickly, where (a Text being premised, and from it some useful Instructions concerning a Married State,) the Persons to be Married are called forth before the Congregation that is present, and to be Witnesses of what is to be done, and they are interrogated, how voluntarily and lawfully

fully they join together, ( *Gen. 24. 57, 58.* ) they bind themselves to one another by the *Marriage Vow*, into an indissoluble Bond of mutual Love and Faithfulness: And taking each other by the Right Hand, they are by the Minister declared to be lawfully Married Persons, and confirmed by Christ's Words, ( *Whom GOD hath joined, let no Man put asunder, Matth. 19. 5, 6.* ) in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

4. *Prayers* are put up for the new Married unto GOD.

5. The new Married Persons are stirred up to a *Hope* of the *Divine Blessing*, and this is confirm'd unto them in GOD's Name. And all who are present, are exhorted to *Piety*, *Modesty*, and *Temperance* in their Feasting, and to avoid *Drunkenness*, *Scurrility*, *Dancings*, and other Scandals.

## VI. THE FORM OF VISITING THE SICK, and Burying the Dead.

1. Any of our *Number* being seiz'd with any grievous Disease, recommends himself to the *Prayers* of the Church, which are put up for him, ( *Jam. 5. 14, 15.* )

2. He is *Visited* by the Minister. ( *Matth. 25. 36.* ) he is first, by the Word of GOD, warned to *Repentance*, ( *Is. 38. 1.* ) then he is raised to the *Hope* of Mercy and Salvation: He is put in mind also, howsoever GOD shall think fit to dispose of him, to be prepared either for *Life* or *Death*, ( *Phil. 1. 21.* ) and to trust, that, having lived in the *Faith* of the Son of GOD here, he shall not pass from *Death* to *Judgment*, but unto *Life Eternal*.

3. If he desire yet to be *strengthened in Spirit* by the Use of the *Eucharist*, it is not denied him: In the mean time, some others are call'd together, that it may be truly a *Communion* of Saints.

In conveying the *Bodies* of the deceas'd to the *Grave*, that Pious Custom is observed with us, that is in use likewise elsewhere; namely the Pastor, with the Schollars, do convey with Singing the Corps of the Faithful to the place of Burial: And there, in a *Funeral Sermon* according to the Occasion, such things are recommended from GOD's Word to the People there present, as may serve for *Instruction*, *Comfort* and *Caution*.

## VII. THE



# VII. THE MANNER OF OBSERVING Festival Days.

Among Festival Days, we give the Prebeminence to the Seventh Day, the Lord's Day: Which we judge not lawful for any Man to employ in External and Servile Works, no not under a Pretext of Christian Liberty. And that because we look upon the Institution of it to be, not Ceremonial, but a part of the Moral Law, perpetually inviolable. For,

1. Before the written Law it self, even from the Creation of the World, it was instituted and enjoind, as it were, to all Mankind, and consecrated with a peculiar Blessing.

2. In like manner, in the Law it self, we do not find it instituted among the Ceremonials, but in the very Decalogue: Which was promulgated, not by Moses, the Promulgator of the Ceremonies and Shadows, but from Heaven by GOD himself, with a Voice of Majesty, and written with the Finger of GOD on Tables of Stone, [ Exod. 20. 8, 22. Exod. 31. 18. ]

3. We do not find any Command so oft repeated by the Law and the Prophets, and so earnestly enjoind, as the Command of the Sabbath. It is not probable, that GOD could have set such Value upon a Ceremony; especially while he protests, that he did not require Ceremonies, (Ps. 50. 8. Jer. 7. 22, 23. )

4. GOD does no where appeal so often to his own Example, as in this Command: to wit, Because he rested from all his External Works, that therefore we should rest, ( Exod. 20. 11. )

5. GOD is so displeased with the Transgressors of this Command, that he will'd them expressly to be put to Death, ( Exod. 31. 14. Num. 15. 35. ) And on the other hand, he promiseth to those that keep the same, the Rewards of this Life, and of Life Eternal, ( 1s. 56. 2. and 58. 13, 14. )

6. Neither doth GOD conceal the reason, why he so earnestly requires this of his People. For, saith he, this is a Sign between me and you, throughout your Generations, that I am the Lord, who sanctify you, ( Exod. 31. 13. Ezek. 20. 12. )

7. Therefore Christ, tho' Lord of the Sabbath, ( Mark 2. 28. ) kept Holy nevertheless the Sabbath Day: Not indeed after a Pharisaical Ceremonial manner, but so as that almost always on the Sabbath

baths he taught the *Word* of GOD, and did *Works of Mercy*, healing the Sick, (*Luke* 4. 16, 18, and 14. 2.) In like manner the Apostles having transferr'd the Glory of the Sabbath unto the First Day, did observe those days exactly: Namely, by calling together Holy Assemblies, and having in them Exercises of Piety, so that many times they continued together, until the Evening, and till Midnight, (*1 Cor.* 16. 2. *Acts* 20. 7, 10.) And hence gave it the Name of the *Lord's Day*, (*Rev.* 1. 10.)

Now we sanctifie the *Lord's Day* after this manner.

1. By resting from outward Labour, from Carriages, bearing Burdens, going about those things which relate to Trading, Worldly Business, Subsistence, that even the Servants and the Beasts also may rest from Toil, and breath some Quiet, (*Exod.* 20. 10. *Nehem.* 13. 15.) But by abstaining yet more from the *Works of the Flesh*, Drunkenness, Dancings, Dice, idle Wanderings, and idle Communication: From Marriage Feasts also, Fairs and Markets. It was the Custom also, (especially where the Magistrate protected the Church) that timeously, on the Sabbath Day, or Saturday preceeding the *Lord's Day*, before Sun-set, all left off their outward Labours, and with the approaching Evening began the Hallowing of the Day which was holy unto GOD.

2. By going about Spiritual and Divine Things, namely singing *Hymns*, and reading the *Scriptures*, even on the Sabbath or Saturday in the Evening, and next Morning, and throughout the whole *Lord's Day*, by frequenting the *Publick Assemblies*, meditating and going about Sacred Things, not once or twice only, but (as was said before) four or five times. For seeing GOD has taken out this whole day from among the List of the other days, and ascribed it wholly to himself, as his own holy Day, (*Exod.* 20. 9, 10. *Is.* 58. 13.) our Fathers judgd it most convenient, that the better part of it should be spent in the publick Society of the Faithful, and that by this means they might prevent unnecessary Vaguing, Idleness, and other Vanities, which GOD will have banish'd from his Holy Day, (*Is.* 58. 13.) Therefore also we dissuade Men from looking over their In-comes, casting up their *Accompts*, and seeking in their *Debts*: That all, forgetting *Temporal Things*, may learn to seek after those things that are *Eternal*, (*Heb.* 4. 9.)

More.



Moreover we celebrate on certain days the Remembrance of the *chief Works of Christ*, namely, his *Coming*, ( or *Incarnation*, ) his *Nativity*, *Death*, *Resurrection*, *Ascension*, the *sending of the Holy Ghost*, also his *Circumcision*, *Epiphany*, *Transfiguration*. Moreover the days of the *Apostles*, and of some of the *Martyrs*: But these we observe with the same Christian Liberty that others do, as Memorials only, and Occasions of proposing Examples of Patience and Constancy in the Martyrs, and so of instructing the People in something that is profitable for them, ( *Heb. 14. 7.* ) For the Sermon and Prayers being ended, all betake themselves to their Labours as on other days, ( *Exod. 20. 9.* )

### VIII. THE CUSTOMS ABOUT DAYS OF PUBLICK

*and Solemn Prayers and Humiliations.*

Four times a Year, or every Third Month, we observe certain days, for renewing among the People the Study and Care of *Penitence*. On which days, ( *Wednesday and Friday* ) the People being frequently met together, are taught out of *GOD's Word*, according as the time requires: Then Confession is made of Sins, the *Mercy of GOD* implored, with a Deprecation of his Wrath; *Fervent Prayers* are put up to *GOD*, that it may please him to grant *Peace* to his Church, *Faithful Labourers*, *Godly Nursing Fathers*, and the Church being bless'd with such, to govern them with the Spirit of Wisdom and Counsel, to convert and raise up those that are fallen and gone astray; and having Compassion on *Infidel Nations*, that it may please him to bring them into his Church. And because these days are called by us *Penitential Days*, the People are exhorted and stirred up to true Repentance, Fasting, Sobriety, Almsgiving, ( *Matth. 5. 44, 45, and 9. 38. 2 Thes. 3. 1.* ) And that, throughout the day, they may, in their own Houses, renew their Prayers and Breathings unto *GOD*; and that especially every Master of a Family mind this with his Family, at Noon, Afternoon, and in the Evening.

### IX. THE RITES OF FASTS.

1. We teach, that *Fasting* consists not in the Choice of Meats, but in an Abstinence, for some time, from all Meat and Drink, and from Sleep also: And that at least till the Evening, unless the State of ones Health cannot permit it.

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2. We do not go about this, from an Opinion of Merit, or as a part of Divine Worship; but as a Mean of *Mortifying the Flesh*, of Humility, and of exciting Contrition for our Sins; and that the Mind may be more sedate for meditating upon Divine Things, (*Zech. 7. 5. 1st. 58. 5.*)

3. We use to appoint such *Fasts*,

1. On Solemn Days of Prayer, as has been said already.

2. Upon any *Imminent Danger* of War, Pestilence, or Persecution, even of one Church, or of one Man.

3. When the *Ministers* of the Church are to be chosen and ordain'd in the Assemblies.

We are stirred up to the Use of such *Fasts*, both by the Exhortations and Examples of the Holy Scripture, (*Jos. 2. 12, 15. 2 Cor. 6. 5. Ps. 35. 13. Jon. 3. 8. Acts 13. 3.*)

#### X. OF ALMS.

1. These the People bring as *Voluntary Oblations* into the Church Treasury, according as they are willing, for the Use of the Poor among the Faithful, (*Luke 21. 4.*)

2. As this is free to every Man, when he pleases, so there use to be no joint *Collections*, but on the days of Prayer, and Fasting, and the Holy Communion, and if any extraordinary Necessity fall out, (*1 Cor. 16. 1.*)

3. These use to be given out and distributed to the Poor, according to every ones Necessity, either by providing for some of them, Food and Raiment in *Hospitals*, or by affording some Help to those who are worn by Age or Sicknes.

4. Every Church has their own *Alms*, by which they may relieve their poor. But if any of them be in so mean a state, as that they cannot supply their own poor, some relief is afforded them from the other Churches: That according to the *Apostles* prescript, *the abundance of some may be a supply to the want of others*, (*2 Cor. 8. 14.*)

5. Neither is that only with us called *Alms*, which useth to be given into the Treasury of the Church; but likewise all *works of Mercy*: Namely whatsoever Humanity a Man shews to his Neighbour in Christ's Name by affording Meat, Drink, Cloathing, Lodging, Physick, and the other Necessaries of Life.

6. To



6. To which *Alms Men* use to be stirred up by the *Doctrine* of the *Scriptures* : Which exhort us to it, and direct us in it, and promise most bountiful rewards ( *Deut.* 15. 7. 8. *Prov.* 19. 17. *Math.* 6. 3. 5. *Luke* 14. 12, 14. *Heb.* 13. 16. )

## CHAP. IV.

### *Of the Domestick Order of the Ministers.*

**T**HE *Pastours*, according to Ancient practice, train up with them in their Houses, *young Youths* of honest Parentage who have been well Educated by their Parents and give hopes that they will apply their Minds to the *Holy Ministry*, they instruct them in the *Holy Scriptures* and in Piety, and form their Minds to *Virtue* Modesty and Obedience : Sometimes also they set them to External labours, even as they likewise do those who are more advanced, the *Acoluths*, the *Deacons* and the *New Ministers* ( both for avoiding of idleness, and because of Necessity, *2 King.* 6. 1. 4. *1 Cor.* 4. 12. ) In which exercises they proceed in a certain order ; so that for example there is a *set Hour* of Rising, of going to Prayer, of Studying and Labouring, of Dining, Supping, going to Bed, ( *Eccles.* 3. 1. ) For at the Ringing of a little Bell, all *do arise* ; and having wash'd, and put on their Cloaths, they kneeling together praise GOD. *Pf.* 5. 4. ) Then every one betakes himself to the *Reading* and *Meditation* of *Sacred things*. About an Hour there-after the Bell Rings again, and then all the Family meet together *Pf.* 88. 13. and 119. 147. 148. *Prov.* 8. 34. ) and a *Psalms* or *Hymn* being first sung, the Pastor himself, or he whose tour it is for that day ( for all who are design'd for the Ministry, even the young Boyes, are put to such exercises ) reads a portion of the *Scripture*, Expounds it and makes usefull remarks on it, and exhorts to the praising of, and calling upon GOD. Prayers being ended, every one returns to his own work, in Reading, Writing, getting by Heart, or also ( where there are Schools ) in hearing of Latin Lessons. And afterwards some of those are sent to Foreign Schools, at the Expense of the Parents, or the Bishops, according to Mens Worldly Circumstances. The Afternoon, as less fit for Study, is spent for the most part even to Supper in external works, except

except those who are taken up in instructing the *Youth* of the Town. In the mean time at Two a Clock in the Afternoon (after the Apostles their Example *Act. 3. 1.*) they meet again to Prayer. The time that remains after Supper, they imploy either in the exercise of Musick, or in singing of Psalms. Then they shut up all with *evening Prayers* (*Psal. 55. 18.*) and every one betakes himself to rest: Neither is the sitting up at night, much less the going abroad without doors, permitted to any. The *Doors* therefore are timeously shut, the *Keyes* are delivered to the Master of the Family or the Keeper for that day. *Dinner* and *Supper* time is not past in silence, nor in idle talk; but the Boyes repeat either the *Rules of Manners*, or the *Catechism*, or *Songs* and *Psalms*, which they are bid get by Heart; and those who are further advanced, some portion of the *Sacred Text* in Order. In the time that remains, some *Question of Theology* is proposed, relating for the most part to the common place of that week, in the resolving of which, every one, (beginning at the youngest) tries his strength, and then the Pastor concludes. Sometimes also, in stead of such a Question, something is ordered to be read. In like manner all of them have divided among them, the *Duties of the Order of the House*; that all of them from their Youth may be inured to a certain care and diligence, that is necessary for the right performance of the Duties of their Vocation, and none of them may eat the Bread of Idleness. To the Elder greater matters; to the Younger lesser are committed. To the Younger, for example, the care of bringing water for washing the hands, covering the Table, sweeping the Rooms, &c. To the Elder, the care of the Door of the House, of the Cellar, the Granary, the Gardens, the Clock, the Library, Cleanliness, that none of them may be without exercise and Vigilance, for their own and the publick Good.

THE COMMON DUTIES, which yet are to be performed  
in Order, are Twofold.

Some of them are *Domestick Offices*, common to the Ministers, Deacons and Acoluths, which one of them goes about for one day, a Second for the next, a Third for the following day, and so on to the last. You may call him the *Decurion*, or the *Keeper of Order*, whose



whose Duties are, 1. To Ring the Bell for rising in the Morning; 2. To light the Lamp. 3. To moderate the singing before Prayers. 4. To read the Text. 5. To make the Exhortation. 6. To mark any that's absent from the Prayers, or his Studies. 7. To furnish the Question for discourse at Dinner, (all which is to be understood also of the Supper and the Evening Prayers) 8. Then at night to shut up the House, and to deliver the Keyes to the Pastor, or to whom they are due.

There are other publick Offices, of those only which are exercised in preaching to the People, to wit, on week dayes. This also proceeds in order, that every one may be timeously prepared for it, and all may profit in the Gift of Preaching, ( Num. 11. 29. 1 Cor. 14. 31. ) For which this also is useful, that there being People in the Neighbourhood, who either because of too great a distance, or because of sickness, cannot conveniently attend the publick Worship; the Pastors send Deacons or Acoluths ( either every Lord's day, or by intervals ) who may speak to them the Word of GOD : And this is profitable on both sides. For thereby none of the People are any where neglected ; and the Candidates of the Ministry are still every where improving themselves.

For this cause all of them use to apply themselves timeously to meditate upon the Dominical Texts ( or the Texts of the next Lords day : ) it may be three dayes before. For on the Sabbath day ( or Saturday ) after morning Prayers, the Pastour asks, *what every ones Meditation is, upon the morrow's Text ?* They give an account of them, first the Acoluths, and then the rest in order. Then the Pastor concludes, and shews what they all ought chiefly to have respect to, or what they ought to urge ( according to the difference of times and occasions ) and where every one is to go and teach.

For avoiding also of many inconveniencies, all who have given up their Names to the Fraternity, are bound to this Law, that they do not offer to do any thing at their own pleasure : Whether in going abroad [ without the knowledge of the Pastour or Assistant ] or in purchasing to themselves any Uensils, or in sending Letters of any moment ] any where, or in giving any thing that belongs to them to another, or taking that which is anothers in pledge, far less concurring with others to sign Contracts, Order Testaments, Bonds, [ in a word any political Affairs. ]

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The Younger, The Boyes and Acoluths, undergo weekly a Trial, what they have done, what they have Learned, how becomingly they have carried in all things. But yearly about the beginning of the year, there useth to be a renewing of all the Domestick Duties: Not only because there useth to be a change of Persons and a transferring of them [as there is need] from one Pastor to another; but also that there may be a redintegration of good Order, and Love and Obedience, and the making Conscience of it may be excited in all. At this time also an account is given, *What Author each one has perused, and with what profit, for that year*; and a new Task is given them for the following year.

Finally it is the appointment of the Unity, *that none of the Pastors or their Helpers go abroad without necessity* [and as little as may be without the consent of the Senior] *and when he goes abroad that he lodge no where but in the Houses of the Brethren* [except where they are wanting.] For there they use to be received and entertained as they have need. And Exhortations either at private Prayers, or to the People from the Pulpit are the presents of the Guests, to testify and confirm the Harmony both of their Minds and Doctrine: That in this matter also they may follow the example of the Primitive Church [Act. 13. 15.]

## C H A P. V.

### *Of the Domestick Order of the People.*

THE Ministers among the Brethren do not only observe good Order themselves, but they lead the People also committed to their care, to do the same in their Houses: Namely,

1. That according as GOD has called every one, and placed them either *Master or Mistress of a Family*, or *Son or Servant*, so they should keep their own Station in the fear of GOD, [1 Cor. 7, 20. Eph. 4. 1.]

2. That all attend the *Worship of GOD*, in the Morning, Evening and at Noon day, before and after Meate, calling upon GOD, singing Hymns and reading the Holy Scriptures [1 Tim. 2. 1. and 4. 5. Deut. 8. 10.]

3. That



3. That they do not neglect the *Publick Worship*, but attend it diligently, and bring their *Family* with them, ( *Heb. 10. 25.* )

4. That they piously instruct their *Children and Servants* in the Christian Religion : Especially on the Lord's Days, taking an exact account what each of them has observed of the Sermons ( *Deut.*

6. 7. *Eph. 6. 4.* )

5. That *Masters and Mistresses of Families* take care to go before their Family in a *good example*, and oblige them to follow them.

6. That they *do not suffer* within their Families, nor permit in their Children or Servants elsewhere, worldly *Dissoluteness*, Drunkenness, Dancings, Swearing, filthy speaking, Dicing and the like.

7. That they daily exercise their Children in *fit Labours*; and make them *shun Idleness* as the Poyson of Youth.

8. That all be most observant of *Piety*, according to the Moral Law.

9. That *Masters of Families* do not ramble thro Taverns and Ale Houses, nor trifle away their time in Idleness, Playes, Drinking, nor go from home in the Night time, but looking closey to their own business, they may watch over their own Families.

10. That they *shun Unlawful and Suspicious* wayes of seeking Subsistence, abstaining altogether from Usury, because of the Divine Threatnings, and the several Iniquities concurring therein, ( *1 Thes. 4. 6. Exod. 22. 25. Ps. 15. 5.* )

11. That they be not hasty to *go to Law*, but rather to take up friendly the differences that fall out, either by the Eldership or chosen Arbiters.

12. This was also observed by our Fathers, that both they who went abroad, about their business, or to dwell elsewhere, acquainted the Pastors with it, beg'd the Prayers of the Church, took a Testimony to other Pastors; that if they stood in need any where of Counsel, Instruction, or the Ministry, *Paish* might be given them. For, for Orders sake, the People ought not to seek the Ministry of other Pastors, nor Pastors to Minister to unknown People, lest this inordinate License turn into an abuse, and loss of Discipline.

To which *Pious Institutions*, the People being piously inured, they do not unwillingly keep themselves within those bounds. But if

there fall out any Exorbitancy, by sedulous admonitions, they are again brought into Order: (1 *Joh.* 4. 6. 2 *Cor.* 7. 15. 1 *Cor.* 16. 16. and 2 *Cor.* 2. 9.)

## CHAP. VI.

### Of Visitations.

**I**T is certain, that no Order, tho' exactly instituted, can last without frequent *Inspection* (*Eph.* 4. 16. *Heb.* 12. 13.) for this end it is, that the *Master* does often visit and oversee his Scholars, the *Head of a Family* his Workmen, because it is impossible for Men to be kept in Duty without Exhortations and Dissuaves. And for this cause, in the Unity of the Brethren, was brought in not only the *Inspection* of Pastors over the People as is said, but also the *Inspection* of Bishops over the Pastors themselves and all the Churches; namely according to the example of the Apostles, who took care to confirm the Churches which they had founded by visiting them (*Act.* 14. 21, 22, and 15. 36, 41.) Therefore as to the Visitations of the Churches, we are to shew,

1. *When they use to be gone about.*

2. *By whom they are performed.*

3. *What is the Affair of the Visitors.*

1. The *Visitations* are so ordered, as that every Church may be visited once a year: Which is usually gone about in the Spring, Summer or Harvest: But if need be (as if a Pastor is to be presented to a Church, or any Scandal to be removed) it is done also in the Winter. If the *Visitors* cannot go about all the Churches in the same year, those of them in which is observed least of urgent necessity, are delayed till the following year.

2. This *Province* belongs properly to the *Bishops*, that every one of them with the *Conseniors* his Colleagues may visit those within his *Diocesis*. But if he is withheld by lawful impediments, he sends the *Conseniors* (*1 Thes.* 3. 1, 2.) They also use to adjoyn one or two Pastours of the Neighbourhood, that the People, observing the *Concord* of the Pastors, may have the greater confidence as to all that is done by them: The Pastor to be visited is timeously warned of it.

3. The work of the Visitors is partly *Ordinary*, partly *Extraordinary*.

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The Ordinary is either gone about private'y with particular Persons, or publickly before the whole Congregation.

How soon the visitors come upon the place ( or on the Sabbath day [ Saturday ] in the Forenoon ) presently.

1. They ask the Pastor himself apart, *In what state the Affairs of his Church are? What there is that has most need to be considered and helped? Then they enquire into himself, If he is a faithfull servant, and a Workman that needs not be ashamed, ( 1 Tim. 2. 15. ) If he give attendance to reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine? ( 1 Tim. 4. 13. ) How he goes before the People in a good example ( Verse 12. ) They what Subsistence he has? How he trains up the Youth entrusted to him by the Unity? How each of them do behave? How obedient they are? how they profit? Then as to the People, Whether his Flock does increase or decrease? ( and they order him to give in a Catalogue of them. ) If there be any Scandalous Persons, to whom some remedy may be applyed? How the Elders, and Matrons, and Almoners do each their Duty?*

2. Then the Helpers; and the Disciples of the Pastor, are called ( *the Ministers, Deacons and Acoluths* ) and they are asked: *If they abide firm in their purpose and endeavour after Sanctification and Holiness? What progress they make in Piety? How they maintain brotherly Love and Concord: ( Col. 4. 8. ) How they are treated by the Pastor? Whether they have great want of any thing? How much time is allowed them for their Studies? and how they imploy it? What every one has done throughout that time? ( for the Visitors use sometimes to furnish both the Pastor and his Disciples with Books that they may read them, and they ask if they have done it, and with what profit, and recommend somewhat else to be perus'd or done by them. )*

3. Then the Elders are called, who being saluted in the Name of the absent Seniors and Churches, they are asked concerning the Pastor, *How he does his Duty? If he edifies them both by word and deed? If any Scandal has arisen by him or any of his Domesticks? Finally, If they have remarked any thing that is fit to be done, which may concern the good of the whole Church?*

4. Having call'd likewise the *Matrons*, they enquire of them, *How they go about their Office, in taking heed to the younger Sisters? If there falls out amongst any of them Hatred, Envy, Strife, Calumnies, Van-  
nity of apparel, &c.*

5. The Inventaries likewise of the Domestick Utensils use to be

Revised, the Church Wardens and Elders being present, the Buildings also, if they be deteriorate in any thing?

6. Where the Magistrate joins with the Congregation, the Visitors do likewise salute him, and learn if he be pleased with his Pastor.

The publick work of the Visitors in the Church is, 1. By preaching of the word of God, to inflame the People to an Ardent love of God: 2. To confirm them in all Faith and Charity by the Administration of the Holy Supper. 3. By several Exhortations according to their different states, to excite all from henceforth to do their duties cheerfully.

The extraordinary business of the Visitors, which falls out sometimes is, either the reconciling of such differences as the Pastor could not take away (as if any Dissention fall out between the Congregation and the Pastor or the Magistrate) or the Institution of a New Minister, (of which Ceremony we have spoken already in Chapter 2. or the Introduction of a New Pastor, or the Ordination of Elders, or Finally the Dedication of a Church.

### The ORDINATION of LAY ELDERS.

The ordination of Elders when there is need, is gone about after this manner, all the Men are appointed to present themselves timeously before the Evening Sermon, and there an Admonition being given by the Visitors, they chuse by free Votes, whom they judge worthy of that Office. They who are chosen by Plurality of Votes, after Evening Sermon is ended, are call'd forth by the Visitor, and the Duties of their Office, (all the People giving attention) are read unto them: And they by word and with their hand lifted up, do promise to the Bishops, the Pastor and their Church, faithfulness and diligence. And that in the Church also they may do the Duty of Watchmen, they are Honoured with a proper seat, that they may the more conveniently see the People.

The like procedure is observed when Matrons are chosen, excepting only, that when it is gone about, the Female Sex only is present.

## II. THE DEDICATION OF THE CHURCH.

With us, the Dedication or Consecration of Churches is after this manner.

1. The People being met, after singing of a Divine Song, the Visitor declares, *for what end this House is built?* To wit, that it may

be



be a *Bethel*, the House of GOD, and the Gate of Heaven, [ *Gen. 28. 17. 19. 11. 56. 7. Luke 19. 46.* ] And that therefore it is now to be given and consecrated to that Use.

2. He minds them, that the one, only, perfect *Sanctifier* of all things is GOD, who saith, *I am the LORD that doth sanctifie you.* [ *Exod. 31. 13.* ] And of the Tabernacle built by *Moses*: *And I will sanctifie the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and the Tabernacle shall be sanctified by my Glory.* [ *Exod. 29. 43, 44.* ] And to *Solomon*, concerning the Temple built by him, *I have heard thy Prayer, I have hallowed this House to put my Name there,* [ *1 King. 9. 3.* ] Therefore he exhorts them, that all now may turn their Eyes to GOD, and most humbly pray, that there also he may put his Name, [ *Deut. 12. 5, 11.* ]

3. All the Congregation therefore humble themselves upon their Knees, and by Godly Prayer, (in Imitation of *Solomon*, *1 King. 8.*) do fervently call upon GOD.

4. There is a *Warning* given, with a *Protestation*, that that Holy Place be not applied to any other Uses, but for Holy Meetings, and for performing the Sacred Worship of the most Holy GOD, in the presence of the Elect Angels.

5. And because every thing is *sanctified by the Word of GOD, and by Prayer*, ( *1 Tim. 4. 5.* ) the preaching also of GOD's Word, and the Holy Communion, are immediatly gone about.

6. Finally, the Name of GOD is call'd upon, and the Action is closed with Prayers for the Divine Blessing, to accompany all those who shall there serve GOD with an Upright Heart.

## C H A P. VII.

### OF THE ORDER AND DEGREES of Church Discipline.

**H**OW Order is preserv'd by various kinds of Inspection and Visitation, has been told already. But it is not enough for a Gardener to visit now and then his young Trees, a Master his Scholars, the Master of a Family his Workmen: Reason also dictates, that the first must prune off the Superfluous Branches, the second redress their Faults, and the third rebuke and chastise the Slothful. The Church therefore has

has need also of *Discipline*, by which the Exorbitant may be restrained, the Disobedient may be put to Shame, the Stubborn may be chastised, and Putrid and Corrupt Members may be cut off and thrown away. Hence Christ saith, *Salt is good: Have Salt in your selves, and have Peace one with another*, (Mark 9. 50.) And again, *If thy Brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his Fault*, (Matth 18. 15.) Again, *If thy right Hand, or Foot, offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee*, (vers. 8, 9.) Finally, the Apostle declares, that Discipline or Correction is a Token of being GOD's Children. *If, saith he, ye endure Chastening, GOD dealeth with you, as with Sons. But if ye be without Chastisement, whereof all are Partakers, then are ye Bastards, and not Sons*, (Heb. 12. 7, 8.)

And for these Causes, from the first beginnings of our Union, all these who join'd in this Holy Fellowship of Faith and Charity, did subject themselves to this wholesome Divine Institution of Discipline, High and Low, Seniors and Conseniors, Ministers and their Helpers, all the People, Nobles and Commons, yea and the Magistrates themselves: Looking on this as an *Antidote against Sin*, when they considered, that there were Persons watching over their Life and Conversation, who had power to admonish and call them back, and so to draw them back, when they were going dangerously astray, (Psal. 119. 71. and 141. 5. 2 Cor. 7. 8, 9, 10, 11.) Thus then, all subject themselves to Discipline, from the Child even to the gray Hairs, from the Subject to the Lord, from the Acoluth even to the Bishop; and that for their own Good, and that of others. For since every one is a Man, he may fall, (Prov. 24. 16. Jam. 3. 2.) but that he may not continue in his Fall, and so languish, die and perish, a Remedy is prescrib'd by Christ the Physician of Souls, and that we see is Discipline. Which, when it is prudently administered, is not only profitable for him, on whom it is exercised, but for others also. Hence the Apostle says, *Those that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear*, (1 Tim. 5. 20.)

Now the Degrees of Discipline, according to Christ's Prescript, (Matth. 18. 15.) are three.

1. *Admonition, or Privat Reproof.*
2. *Publick Rebuke and Shame.*
3. *Excommunication, and a total casting out of the Church.*

I. For, First, all are taught here, that this Priviledge is granted by Christ, yea a Command is given, that every one have a Care

of



of his Brother, and that if he see him sin, he admonish him of it, ( 1 *Thess.* 5. 11. *Heb.* 3. 13. ) They advise therefore, that one Brother admonish another, one Sister another, ( especially that the Elder admonish the Younger. ) But if any slight such Admonition, that another of greater Authority may be put upon it, who may deal with him in the Spirit of Meekness; which especially is proper for one of the Elders, or for the Pastor himself.

## II. Of the Milder Publick Discipline.

If no Amendment follow, he is brought before the whole Eldership, where he is earnestly admonished, that he may acknowledge his Sin and forsake it. If he yield, he is dismiss'd with an Admonition and Consolation: If he go on to be Contumacious, his Conscience is bound with the Power of the Keyes, and he is suspended from the Communion of the Holy Supper, till he come to himself, and correct his Manners.

This is done in lesser Faults, but in greater ones, and heinous Sins, they proceed otherwise. For the Sinner being cited before the Pastor and Eldership, as oft as is needful, his Sin is aggravated to him. If he acknowledge the Heinousness of it, and being confounded within himself, be truly grieved for it, he is raised into Hope of Pardon, ( *Acts* 3. 17, 18, 19. ) but this upon certain Conditions. To wit,

*First*, That he exercise himself for some time in true Penitence, deprecating the Wrath of GOD for his Sins, mortifying the Flesh, and bringing forth a real Amendment of Life. And the Exercise of this sort of Penitence is continued till the next Communion or further, according as they bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance. The Church, in the mean time, not omitting to put up Prayers to GOD for them.

*Secondly*, That he give Satisfaction to the Church, whom he hath grieved, and thereby reconcile himself to it; deprecating publicly all who are scandalized, sometimes by himself, sometimes by the Pastor. But if his Sin be not at all publicly known, they rest in his begging Pardon before the Eldership. All is done for this end, that the Sinner being confounded, may have occasion of repenting more sincerely, and of walking henceforth more cautiously, and the rest may become wise by the others Danger.

III. *Of the Excommunication of the Incurable.*

If the Crime be very Flagitious; or the Sinner, instead of being Penitent, prove Contumacious, they proceed to the *last Degree of the Keyes*, which is *Excommunication*: Which Christ, and his Apostles, require to be used in the Church, ( *Matth. 18. 17. 1 Cor. 5. 5, &c.* ) Here then the Sinner is wholly excluded from the Communion of Saints, *delivered unto Satan, unless he repent*. The Excommunication being publicly pronounced, all the People, setting to their Seal, as it were, to what is done in the Name of Christ, cry out, *Amen*: Not without the Groans and Tears of the Godly. So obstinate Sinners, being excommunicated, are reputed as Publicans and Heathens; even as Christ commanded. Yet Hope of Mercy is not denied to any, if, by serious Repentance, he will return from the way of Damnation into that of Salvation. And if they see the Grace of Repentance to be granted unto any, they rejoice at it: And after a sufficient Trial of his Penitence, if it is in earnest, they receive him again with the Joy of the whole Church, ( *2 Cor. 2. 7.* ) and so administer *the other part of the Keyes*, opening Heaven to Penitents.

This Church Discipline, thro' all its Degrees, useth to be extended to Delinquents, and taken off from Penitents, not hypocritically, nor fiercely and tyrannically, but as the Apostle advised, ( *Gal. 6. 1.* ) *In the Spirit of Meekness, and with tender Compassion*, ( *2 Cor. 2. 4, 5, 6, 7.* ) *In the Name and by the Authority of Christ*, ( *1 Cor. 5. 4.* ) *For Edification, and not for Destruction*, ( *2 Cor. 10. 4, 5, 6. and 13. 10.* )

## THE CONCLUSION.

These are the *Rites of our Church Order*, which our Fathers, having drawn them out of the Word of GOD, did embrace, and observed them for two Ages, under great Persecution, and with much Patience, but with great Advantage, both to themselves and GOD's People: And we also ( finding nothing hitherto tending more to Edification ) endeavour, by GOD's Help, to observe them. *If it please any other Churches, to observe the very same, or a like way of Order, we are ready not to enuy them, but rather to bless GOD with them*; provided the Apostles Rule be kept, *Let all things be done decently, and in Order*, ( *1 Cor. 14. 40.* )

May our Merciful GOD establish, strengthen, and perfect amongst us, and through all Christendom, one and the same Holy Order that is well pleasing unto him, to the saving Edification of his Church, and the Glory of his Name! *AMEN.*

F I N I S.



*Some few of the most remarkable Notes of John-  
Amos Comenius, upon the foregoing Trea-  
tise, which serve to illustrate the same.*

*Of BISHOPS. See Pag. 9.*

**I**F any say, *that with the Apostles a Bishop is the same with a Pastor of the Church,* I answer, be it so. *And every Pastor is a Bishop of his Church; that is a Watchman or Superintendent of his Flock.* Shall he not therefore need a Watchman also? The Apostolick Church saw this altogether needful; and therefore appointed that the Watch-men of many Churches should also have their Watch-man KAT EEOXHN called Bishop.) why should this pious wisdom of Antiquity be condemned? a Flock of Pastors is it not a Flock also? Now what is a Flock without a Pastor? Our eye while it sees all things, does not see it self: but is seen by another eye. Therefore the Watch-man of a Church that looks to others, cannot see himself: There is need then of another Watchman, who may perform that to him that he does to another, that he be not despised. If it be expedient, then it is fit that he be lawfully settled: That all may know who is to watch over every one, and who must be called to an account, if matters are not rightly gone about.

Call them Bishops or Superintendents, or by any other name that's proper in the common Language of every Nation; it is no matter, provided the Church (that is even made up of Many Churches) be not a house without a Porter, a Ship without a Pilot, a Flock without a Pastor.

See P. 10. l. 2. Qu. *If it is better that Presidency or Superintendency be Stated or Ambulatory?* Ans. Some Churches (saith he) in our Age, prefer the last, and observe it in their practice, for these Reasons. 1. *For that it is an occasion of exercising the Gifts of all.* 2. *For that it prevents Ambition and Pride, and all abuse of Dignities, that no Diotrepes may trouble the Church.* Other Churches prefer the first. 1. *Because thus God ordered all by his Law, the Judges, Kings, Levites, Priests, and the high Priest himself, that being once appointed, they should still abide in their Office.* 2. *For that it cannot be made appear that Christ or his Apostles changed this, either by Precept or Example.* 3. *Men rather did so, guided by their Self wisdom.* The Jews, for example, in changing the high Priesthood among them yearly in our Saviour's time (*Math. 26. 3. Joh. 11. 51. Act. 4. 6.*) which Resolution they seem to have taken, because of the Abuse of that high Dignity, when it was settled on one to be continued, they thrusting out one another, as appears from the Book of the *Maccabees*. But did Their change of God's Institution succeed well? From the history of the Gospel it is evi-

dent, That it never fared worse with the Jewist Church, both as to Faith and Manners, than under these Ambulatory Offices (*Act. 5. 17.*). Therefore at last it was wholly rejected by God (*1. Thess. 2. 15, 16.*) 4. Neither have we an Example of Christ's instituting any thing Ambulatory, but all Stated. Thus he chose 70 Disciples from among the People, and to them he gave Power to Teach, Baptize, and work Miracles: *They continued.* Again he chose 12 Apostles, *they continued.* Again of the Apostles he chose three, for some singular works, *Peter, and James, and John*: Did this go in a circle? Not at all. While they lived, they were called *Pillars* (*Gala. 2. 9.*). Neither is there any Evidence that the Apostles did institute *Temporal Pastors or Seneors*, or that they permitted them to change Courses; there are Evidences to the contrary. As that of Christ to the Bishop of *Smirna*: *Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* (*Rev. 2. 10.*) 6. Neither are there any footsteps of such an Ambulatory Government, in the primitive Church after the times of the Apostles. 7. Nor in any Church, *Greek, Roman, Armenian, or Abyssin* unto this day; but all, according to the Divine Appointment, perpetual.

It appears then that there are far more and stronger arguments for the stated Office of Bishops. And the Arguments to the contrary may be easily solved. As to the first, *Let every ones Gifts be exercised in order* Ans. Be it so. But let it be first at the Oars as *Nazianzen* says: And they are not to be brought to the Helm till they have good Experience. As to the 2d. *Let Ambition, Pride, and Tyranny be avoided.* Ans. Let them be avoided. But in ways that do not overturn God's Appointment, such as he himself points out. To wit, let there be added to the Bishop of the Church his Council, as the 70 Elders were to *Moses and Aron*: Without whose consent he may do nothing in greater matters. And according as Christ hath appointed, let not the Apostles (and their Successors the Bishops exercise Lordship and authority as the Kings of the Gentiles; but he that is greatest in the Church, let him be as the least, and he that is chief as he that doth serve (*Luk. 22. 25, 26.*) that is, they are not to have worldly Wealth nor Honours, nor coercive Power over others; but to be so subject to all, as every one is to them. Thus to the Seniors of the *Bohemian Brethren*, there was associated one or two Consensors; and even from these join'd together, an account of their actings was required by Synodal authority, neither did they sit in secular Courts and judicatories. *Human prudence is then subservient to Divine Wisdom, when it does not take away the Divine Ordinance, but keeps it from falling.*

See Pag. 10. Lin 10. As to YOUTH.

The care of the tender Plants of the Church was so ordered as that every Pastor was obliged to maintain, and train up within his house, one or two young Youths of good capacity and inclinations, with the consent and usually at the earnest desire of the Parents. At the Visitations, the

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*Bishop*, either confirmed those in their purpose, and translated them to himself or others for farther improvement, or dismissed them, if there were no hopes of their fitness for the holy calling. And it belonged to the *Bishop* to maintain a greater number of them, and afford them greater occasions of improvement. *As to their publishing of BOOKS.* See P. 12. § 5.

1. *Nothing was published, until it was first Examined by a select number of Seniors and Ministers*, to whom it was committed. That no false thing might be published to seduce the Reader, into error; nor any disdainful thing to offend him.

2. *We used not to be taken up with Polemical Writings.* Both because it did not become our *Simplicity* to be employed in strife, and because we saw others had reaped little advantage by it, but most evident mischief. What *tragedies* has not the itch of disputing raised? What advantage has it brought? *Discords* are not lessened, but encreased; *Debates* are not decided, but multiplied into most minute Controversies, so that of questions, and subquestions there is no end. How unmindful are we of that of *Hilarius: Non per subtile questiones nos Deus, ad cælum vocat. God does not call us to Heaven by subtil Questions.* And O that by these Subtilities, that which is the chief work of Faith had not been forgotten? That *Mutual Charity* and *Meekness*, which Christ bids us learn of him? &c.

3. *They Wrote indeed Apologies for the truth of their Doctrine, and the innocency of their Life, but without invectives against others; and only for obtaining peace.* Neither did they this always when they were attacked, making silence sometimes their buckler. And when they had to do with an insolent Adversary, that could bawl and scold, and do no hurt, they avenged his *insolence* by Silence.

4. *They Wrote but little then, and that Practical, according as the times required.* As in the time of War they wrote a Treatise shewing how grievous a Rod of Gods anger War was, and how to be averted, &c. In peace when they perceived, a dissoluteness of manners they wrote a small but weighty Book of amendment of Life; Shewing thro every order, age and sex, how every one ought to amend their lives according to the *Laws of Jesus Christ.* *As to their SYNODS.* See Pag. 13.

1. *The Bishops only determined the place where it should hold, and he in whose Diocese it was to be, acquainted the Pastor of the place, advising him how to provide all things necessary.*

2. *The Seniors and Conseniors came thither a day before, which was thus employed by them.* They met where the *Synod* was to sit, and after the *President's* having a Pathetick discourse, they all prostrate themselves before God, earnestly imploring the divine aid. Prayers being ended, the *President* exhorts them to *Concord* and the renewing of Love, whereby they might all come with pure minds to give advice for the common Salvation. Then was read by the Clark, what we call the *Register of Duties, Registrum Officium*) ( *It was a Book wherein the power given by Christ to his*

*Church was described And the Duties of those whom the Lord has made Porters, and commanded to watch, Mark. 13. 34. &c.*) This being done, the *President* again adviseth, that every one examining himself, by these, as by a Touchstone, may not conceal what negligence or other Vice he sees and is conscious of, either in himself, or in any brother *Senior* (or *Consenior*;) for now was the time of *Purging out the Leaven*, how little soever it might be.

Having said this, the *Seniors* go into another room where the *President* does again recommend to them most pure *Candour*, that they should lay open their breasts to themselves, as in Gods Sanctuary, in his presence who beholds all things; that they may see plainly, if they are one in the Lord, whether everyone is persuaded, that he himself, or his Brother walks uprightly, or if he himself observes any other thing, or hears it suggested by another? That knowing what it is, and amending it, if it be indeed, they may all make themselves ready to the work of the Lord (even in this Synod) with a pure conscience, and a firm trust in God. In a word, they depart not till first all is made even among themselves, that might occasion a mutual diffidence.

Thus renewing in this manner their union, and confirming it by brotherly embraces, in the presence of God; they return to the *Senate house*, ask the *Conseniors* what they have done in this matter: Making up likewise a concord among them, and with themselves.

Then they pass to business, considering what is fit to be done in the present Synod, and how to provide for the external accommodation of these who are invited, &c.

3. The *Seniors* lodge in the *Pastor's House*, and the rest with Pious Citizens in the Neighbourhood; who rejoice to receive them as the Angels of GOD.

See § 6. *Pag. 14.* 4. *Propositions* are offered by the *Seniors* to the *Pastors*, to be considered by them; and they are advised to draw up also into *Propositions*, what they judge worthy of Consideration, and to give them to the *Seniors*. Which, that it may not be done confusedly, they chuse to themselves, out of their own Number, by free Suffrage, a *President* and a *Clerk*. The *Deacons* and *Acoluths* are not admitted to Counsel, but that, in the mean time, they may not be idle, or wander abroad, there is given them a certain Subject to read, of which they are afterwards examined; there being also assign'd them by the *Seniors* a *Director* of their Actions, and a *Keeper of Order*.

See § 7. of the fore said Page. 5. Something is to be said of their Order in asking and giving their Opinions, and of forming from thence *Conclusions*, that the Vestiges of Good Order may be here observed also, and that both in the *College of the Seniors*, and the *Pastors*.

1. The Meeting being constituted, and Silence made, the *President* ad-



viseth them to enter upon the Affair, which hath occasioned their Meeting, collecting first the *Propositions*: That, from the beginning, they may have under their View, about what Matters they are to deliberate.

2. The *Propositions* then are collected, every one pointing out briefly the Heads of the Things to be considered, and thereafter explaining them, if he be ordered so to do, till they see what is necessary to be treated of as their *εργον*, what to be rejected as impertinent, or at least to be laid aside till afterwards, as a *παρεργον*.

3. Then the *First* are taken under Consideration, and the Opinion of all asked in Order: That every one may tell his Mind in as few Words as he can, and confirm it with Reasons.

4. They give their *Judgment* therefore in Order, beginning at the *Youngest*, and going on to the *Elders*, so as that the *President* may be last in giving his Opinion. *Experience shews this Order to be more convenient, than if it were otherwise.* For, where the first give their Opinion first, *Prejudices* can be hardly avoided, and the Matter will not be duly enough considered by all. *First*, Because the *Younger*, having heard the Judgment of the *Elder*, are preoccupied with an Opinion of the Wisdom of the Aged, so that they do not narrowly consider the Matter; or, tho it seem otherwise to them, yet, being deterr'd by the *Authority* of the *Elder*, they are ashamed to tell, what their Judgment is. But if the *Younger* bring some remarkable thing, that has not occur'd to the *Elder*, there is a two-fold Inconvenience, the *Elder* perhaps are sham'd to retract their Opinion; or, if they do, the *Younger* are in hazard of applauding themselves beyond others. Which Inconveniencies are prevented by our Practice, &c.

5. That they may not stray from the purpose, no Body is permitted to speak of any other Subject, but that which is in hand, till it be brought unto a *Conclusion*.

6. Neither do more than *one* speak at once, whom no Body interrupts; unless he come to speak impertinent things, or talk much, or in Passion; then he is *stopt* by the *President*.

7. If any one has spoke, and another begins to speak, altho something else occur to the first, yet he dare not assume the Discourse again, till all have given their Opinion. Then (having obtain'd leave from the *President*) he illustrates and confirms his Opinion, or he betters it.

8. Now the *Clerk* writes all their Opinions, and the Reasons with which they back them, and his own also, if he have any thing different from others.

9. At last the *President* comparing all together, considers whether they all *aim* at the same thing, or if they differ, and if they can be reconciled. If they can, he shews how one common *Judgment* may be made out of them, so as that all the Reasons that are brought may stand. If they cannot, he shews how they divide in two, and what Reasons make for the one, and what for the other. And if the Matter be weighty, he allows it again to be

be considered, what Reasons may be judged to be most prevalent, and how the contrary Inconveniencies may be avoided.

10. It is free then for every one again to speak, (but briefly, and in Order) and comparing Reasons with Reasons, to shew what seems right to him, till it appear so to all the rest also. And then at length the *Conclusions*, as being of common Consent, are registred. By which Rational Procedure it happens, that all may see the Judgment of the whole Church, and how they speak of things as with one Mouth, and go about them with Unanimity.

See § 4. Pag. 17. *Concerning the third Examination of Ministers to be ordained.*

This close Examination of Conscience is strictly gone about, in Imitation of the Prince of Pastors, examining Peter for the last time, *Joh. 21. 15.* By which occasion is given for the Candidate of the Ministry to search himself thoroughly: *Whether he proposeth to follow Christ, out of pure Love, or for the sake of Bread? ( 1 Joh. 6. 26. ) Whether he is seeking the Flock, or the Wool? Whether he is ready to impart to his Hearers, not only the Gospel of Christ, but his own Soul also; ( 1 Thess. 2. 8. )* and such like. And this last Trial of the Conscience was sometimes so pathetically gone about, that there were not wanting the Examples of some who deprecated the Office, and were more desirous to work out their own Salvation, than to be entrusted with the Care of others. Being at length encouraged with the *Divine Promises*, they followed the Heavenly Call with Fear and Trembling.

See § 6. Pag. 18. *Of the Testimonial given by the two Conseniors to the Minister that is to be ordained.*

This was the Form of it. *Venerable Brother in Christ. We do testifie in the Sight of GOD and his Church, that the Persons present, are of an honest Extract, of an honest Education, of an honest and blameless Life hitherto; and that, being examined by us, we found them sound in Doctrine and Faith, with an Upright Intention to serve GOD and the Church. We desire therefore, in the Name of the Churches which they are to serve, that, by the Power given you by Christ and the Church, you may confer upon them the Pastoral Office, and confirm them in it. The Ordainer answers, This your Testimony given before the Church of Christ is accepted, and your Petition is granted in the Name of GOD.*

See § 9. in the same Page.

Between this Obligation and the Confirmation that follows it, there useth to be interposed a Solemn Thing, that is not to be pass'd in Silence. The Ordainer addressing them again, speaks thus, *Belov'd Brethren, that ye may conceive a firm Hope of the Divine Aid, hear the Eternal High Priest Jesus Christ, praying for you, who being now ready to sanctifie himself a Sacrifice for the World, did most ardently recommend unto his Father all his own, who were to proclaim this Redemption to the Nations, &c.* Then another of

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the Bishops reads, out of the 17. of *John*, Christ's last Prayer so, as that it is seldom heard without Tears. Then they proceed to the Act of Confirmation, the *laying on of Hands*.

See P. 20. § 5.

The *Ritual Books* (or the *Forms* of administering Sacred things) are not annex'd to the Catechisms, so as to come into the Peoples Hands, but being printed by themselves, are given only to the Pastors, not privately in a Corner, but in the presence of the Church. And after the Pastors Death, they return into the Hands of the Seniors. --- The Apostle, when he charges the Bishop *Timothy*, to commit somethings to *Faithful Men, who might be able to teach others also*, does he not thereby insinuate a Difference between those things which were given to all, and those things which were committed only to the Teachers of others?

See § 1. Pag. 20.

Of the calling of Pastors.

If that of Christ's, *As my Father hath sent me, so I send you*. And again, *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you*, was observed any where in this Age, it was certainly with us. Where none sought the Ministry, *who was not called*; none sought a Flock to himself, *not being sent*: Neither did he look for a *Call* or *Mission* any other way, than from those *who were both called and sent themselves*. There was therefore no Church with us, where the Lord of the Place, or the Magistrate sought out a Pastor to himself: But they confidently remitted that Care to the chief Pastors of their Souls, (*whom they judged fit to be to them a Teacher and a Guide*.) This is altogether after the Example of the Apostolick Church, where Suffrages indeed were received from the People, as to those who were to be ordained, but where the Ordained should be sent, was the Care of the Seniors, (*Act. 14. 23. 1 Tim. 1. 3. and 2 Tim. 4. 12. Tit. 1. 5.*) Hence *Grotius* affirms, That it does not appear from all the History of the New Testament, that Pastors were chosen by the People, (*de Imper. Pot. circa Sacra, Cap. X. p. 252.*) And that this was the Practice of the Church after the Times of the Apostles, appears from *Jerome*, who says, *Let the Bishops hear this, who have the Power of placing Presbyters in every City*. And from the Synod of *Laodicea*, (whose Canons are approved by a General Council,) which rejects Popular Elections, (*H. Grot. p.*) And that it ought to be so, appears from weighty Reasons: For thereby is more quickened,

1. The Care of the Bishops for the Churches.

2. The Persuasion of the Ministers, as to their Mission. And.

3. The Pious Confidence of the People in Christ's Servants, (as not coming of themselves, *Matth. 7. 15.* or running of themselves, *Jer. 23. 21.* but sent:) That being sure, that nothing is done by unlawful hunting after it, they can say what *Cornelius* did to *Peter*, *We are here ready to hear all things that are commanded thee of GOD*.

4. And all the Churches may hope, that they shall be all thus provided, when

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when Men remarkable for the special Gifts of GOD are set over the chief Churches, &c.

5. And seeing Schollars do not choose a Master to themselves, (because they understand not what is fit for them,) but leave this Cure to their Parents or Tutors: Why should it be thought amiss, when the like is done here? Sure the Church is Christ's School: Why ought not then the Overseers of the Church, (not to say the Fathers, (1 Cor. 4. 15.) and not the Sheep, seek out Pastors? &c.

6. In short, it is the Interest of none to confound this Apostolick Order, but of Ambitious Persons, who chase rather to thrust themselves in by Solicitations, Money, &c. than to wait a Call. There are again who make Gain by such a Sale, to the great Dishonour and Hurt of the Church. For when Hirelings take the Flock, whom, do you think, they'll feed? the Flock, or themselves? Yea their own Bellies, Chests, and Fancies: Tho' the Lord cry, *Wo to the Shepherds that feed themselves, &c.*

#### Of their SINGING.

Their Books of Divine Hymns, which they sing in the Church, contain'd at first 743 Evangelical Hymns, to which were afterwards added the Psalms of David with proper Tunes, with other Hymns of the Ancient Church. Thus, after the Apostles Advice, *Teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, (Col. 3. 16.)* I will add (says *J. Am. Com.*) on this occasion, that it seems superstitious, that some new days will let nothing be sung in the Churches but the Psalms of David, being moved by this Reason, *that they contain immediately GOD's Word.* As if the Apostle had added in vain to the Psalms, Hymns and spiritual Songs. Or God by the mouth of David had commanded in vain new Songs to be sung, and that in those places where the Kingdom of the Messiah is foretold (Ps. 96. and 98. and 149.) Or as if the Spirit of God in the new Church could move none to sing new Songs, as he did Moses, Deborah, David, Asaph, Ethan, &c. Or as if it would be a good Argument, if none would hear any Sermons (to wit, human expositions of mysteries) but only the pure word of God, in the simple Text. Or finally as if the Psalms which are sung in our Languages were immediatly the words of God: Seeing they are the words of the Interpreters. In short, *The old Church had her songs, let the new also have hers, in a manner suited to her state, the Mysteries being more clearly discovered.*

#### Of BAPTISM.

With us, the Godfathers and Godmothers are not assumed for the fashion, or to be Witnesses only of the Action; but for a more serious purpose, *that they may be truly God-fathers and Godmothers of the Children of God born again, and may be engaged to bring them up holily to God.* The Parents therefore are warned not to bring unknown Persons, or Strangers, or old dying Persons, or such as are eminent only for honour, favour or money, &c. That no spurious intentions may defile so holy a work.





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